The Typhoon's Secret

Helen Sheridan

THE TYPHOON'S SECRET

"Out of the red flame that covered all the sea and sky astern of the Lurline, *the burning steamer rushed on into the darkness that loomed ahead"*

The Typhoon's Secret

BY

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FRONTISPIECE BY

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GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1920

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CHAPTER I

A GREAT SMASH—AND A SIX-CYLINDER GREEN FLYER

"IF A man can get through college, and the world, in a six-cylinder Green Flyer," said Wentworth, "I will manage."

"There is nothing left, then?" queried Allison.

"There is a rather complete wardrobe besides the Green Flyer. And I have a couple of hundred dollars in my pocket at this moment. I do not know of anything else."

He laughed a little, because—well, because a man must laugh when he has come to the jumping-off place. Then he blew a cloud of smoke from his cigarette out into the moonlight.

"Anyway, it is up to me to go and see," he went on. "I never knew much about the Dad's affairs. There was always plenty. But the Green Flyer will take me as far as San Francisco, and with anything like luck I should make the run in something under twenty hours. That will land me there before sunset to-morrow."

"You mean to go to-night?" exclaimed Allison.

"Surest thing you know, my boy! I must find out for myself. And the place for my father's son is there. The Los Angeles papers will be here to-morrow, full of the thing. It isn't my job to face a few gossiping gazabos in a tourist hotel when there is the whole world to stand against."

He waved one hand, as he spoke, toward the whirling crowd of beautifully gowned women and black-garbed men one-stepping under the electric lights of the wide office and wider dining room of the Foothills Hotel, thrown into one for the evening. It was the night of the annual tennis hop—and the tennis hoppers were hopping briskly to sobbing music played on a violin, a bandurria, and two guitars, with drums to beat out the time.

There was a minor wail in the music which it is likely the dancers missed. The art of one-stepping is altogether muscular, very heating when followed with enthusiasm, and so may well be lacking the element of the spirituelle. But the wail came plainly to the heart of John Wentworth. He was conscious of the nameless despair of it when he called Frank Allison to the porch.

Wentworth held in his hand a telegram, just brought to the hotel by a special messenger, and he showed it to Allison at once. It was short enough, but it brought John Wentworth's world about him crashing in ruins. The Bank of the Pacific had closed its doors. The President, Elliot Wentworth, had swum out into the sea from a bathing place at

North Beach—and had not come back. That was all.

As Wentworth had said that they would be, the Los Angeles papers next day were full of it. Allison read the whole story; and faced the little world of the hotel for his friend—as a fraternity brother should.

That night in the moonlight the young men, seated in big rocking chairs under the shadow of the roses that flung a golden glory over the wide front porch of the Foothills, had between themselves alone the knowledge carried in the curt telegram from Elliot Wentworth's lawyer. And being young, the impulse of both was to go out and meet and fight the trouble.

The sobbing Spanish music floated over them from the room where the dancers were and out into the April moonlight that covered all the Ojai Valley with a radiance of silver. As they sat on the porch, with only the plaint of the music to steal across the sympathetic silence that had fallen between them for the moment, they could look down into the wide reaches of the valley, where the sturdy live oaks broke up the moonlight to dapple with its shining paint the young grain in the fields, dark purple where the shadows were. Right at hand, as it seemed, the bare double swales of the golf links ran down to the trees—and, still closer, the feathery bloom of the Colorado camisa lay like a light fall of snow on the branches of the mountain redwoods.

Only there could be no snow in that warm valley

although the moon showed a dazzling bank of it, drift on drift, high on the far-away summit of the Sisar Mountain, as Wentworth rose, at last, followed by Allison, threw away his cigarette, and stepped down from the porch to the driveway in front of the hotel. They were both in evening dress, and were fine, upstanding lads as the moon shone down on them.

"Come on," said Wentworth. "I suppose you will see the last of me, Frank. I must get out of these togs, and make the Green Flyer ready. We can get around to my room the back way."

He started around the corner of the house, Allison beside him.

"You are really going to-night, John?" the latter asked.

"To-night—no less."

"And—and Miss Graeme?"

"This was our dance; I had forgotten."

He stopped, his hand on the knob of the door leading to the back corridor and billiard room.

"But you need not bother to make my excuses, Frank. They will not be needed to-morrow."

He opened the door and passed through, traversing rapidly the length of the short hallway. Wentworth had a front room; the door was unlocked, and he entered and snapped on the light. It showed the usual interior of a man's hotel room, an open steamer trunk in one corner and two suitcases lying half under the bed.

Allison, following him, naturally had more thought for his friend than the friend himself had. Moreover, there was a strange look on his face which the other was too preoccupied to notice, perhaps.

"You will not go without seeing her, John?" he asked.

"Margaret Graeme?" rejoined Wentworth. "My dear boy, the son of a banker might follow an heiress from Coronado to this place. The son of my father —is of a different world."

He spoke bitterly enough—and yet with a kind of gentleness, too. And upon that gentleness, Allison took a friend's liberty.

"But about her feelings, John?"

"She—she is the heiress, my boy."

Allison, closer to him than any man that lived, left the matter there.

"And college?" he queried.

"Goes with the rest."

"You have only one semester to get your degree. Man, think of it!"

"And what good will the degree do me? I cannot live upon it. If I had been a poor man from the first, and specialized! But what is the use, now?"

"I have enough money, my friend," ventured Allison.

Wentworth had been throwing off his dress suit as they talked and, half undressed, he reached out and grasped Allison's hand.

"Pack my things, like a good fellow," he said,

"while I get into my motor togs and go out and wake up the Green Flyer."

Man fashion, Allison began to gather up his friend's belongings and throw them into the suitcases and the steamer trunk, saying nothing more. Wentworth got into heavy boots and khaki trousers and leathern coat and cap. Then he went out, leaving Allison still packing, and presently there was heard a soft chug-chugging as the Green Flyer drew up beside the stoop at the back door.

Wentworth came back into the room a moment afterward, touched the bell for a porter, and lighted a cigarette. Allison had the trunk packed and strapped by that time, and the suitcases closed.

"Sorry to have troubled you, old man," Wentworth said, "but I did not want to call Brooks. I imagine my day for valets and all vanities is at an end, now. Want him yourself? You are most selfishly unprovided."

"Brooks?" queried Allison, in reply.

"The same. You must not judge him from the disorder of my room. He dressed after I did—having an affair of his own on hand, perhaps. He is really a good creature, in the main orderly, when sober—and he can wear your shirts quite as well as mine."

Allison laughed, and Wentworth went on:

"Anyway, I leave you to pay and dismiss him. I don't owe him anything, really, but he will probably want his wages."

The hotel porter came and carried out the steamer trunk, which he lashed to the trunk rack behind the tonneau of the Green Flyer—making a second trip to bring out and throw in the suitcases. Then he went away, with an order to bring the manager. That personage, all bows and smiles, had little time to express surprise at the sudden departure of his guest. But he was conventionally courteous.

"Your bill is not made out, Mr. Wentworth," he said, in reply to John's question, "and the book-keeper has gone to bed, leaving the books locked up. Shall I send it after you?"

"Give it to my friend, Mr. Allison," replied Wentworth, after a moment's thought. "You will see to that for me also, Frank?"

"Of course," and then, following down from the stoop as Wentworth stepped into the car, "I think you might let me do more, John."

"Not another thing, dear boy! But I appreciate your kindness—and I will see you in the city. Good-bye!"

He reached out his hand—and withdrew it quickly, looking to his control. Allison stepped back. The manager waved his hand and cried farewell. The Green Flyer, starting smoothly and slowly, glided around the corner of the building, and was gone.

"Rather a sudden departure, Mr. Allison," said the manager, politely.

"Yes; a telegram called him to San Francisco to-night."

"He will have a beautiful moonlight ride," said the manager.

Allison turned and walked back around the house toward the front verandah. The sobbing music of the Spanish Mazourka had followed the Green Flyer down the hill road until it was lost by the driver in the moonlight—and had ended. The dancers were coming out into the night, laughing and chattering. A little apart, in the shadow, Margaret Graeme's partner, the man who had stepped into her dance when Wentworth failed her, seated her, and was sent for an ice. Allison, as he stepped on the porch, saw her white face peering out into the moonlight as though her eyes searched for someone.

And then, from far down along the road that led men out into the distant world, came the wild shriek of the horn of the Green Flyer—like the voice of a lost human soul calling back to the quick from the dead. Allison saw Margaret's face sink back into the shadow as he stepped forward and took a vacant seat beside her.

Shadows are very kindly things. He told her, there, of Wentworth's call to duty—making the excuses he had been bidden not to make. And she sighed—and listened—and said very little. There may have been, in his heart, an answering sigh to hers but he repressed it. A man is loyal, in the first trial at least, if he has red blood in him. Her partner came back with the ice in a moment, and she rose, and took his arm.

Allison had felt a pressure, the merest touch, of one of her hands on his as she went away, thrilling him. And the words seemed breathed to him, so softly that he was hardly sure that he heard them at all: "A woman watches—and pursues!"

The last word was like an echo, it came so faintly. And then, on her partner's arm, she swept into the lighted room. And she was smiling radiantly. Assuredly, shadows are very kindly things.

And the Green Flyer swept on down the long hill road, under the live oaks that stand all about in the little town of Nordhoff, and along where the moonlight fell in broken showers over the stretches of the mountain stream that marks the line of the Creek Road. The lights blazed from the machine like the gleaming of demon's eyes. It shrieked, as it turned the dark corners under the trees, with a wail that might have been the plaint of a lost soul in the night.

Wentworth had released the muffler as he raced down the slope, to try his cylinders, and the beating of the powerful engine sent a roar of sound into the silence that frightened the coyotes, crouching under the live oaks on the distant slope of Sulphur Mountain and gave pause to the California lion slipping down through the shadows to steal a lamb from the flock of the Basque shepherd, corraled in the scrub oak thicket beyond the uplands of the Santa Ana. And the sea air sang in Wentworth's ears, and the Green Flyer answered to each touch of his firm hand on the steering wheel like a sentient thing.

His thoughts flew as the machine flew. Under the visor of his cap his face was set and hard: the fighting face of a long line of Wentworths, each one of whom had met and conquered the world in his time. All but his own father, he thought. All but his own father! And that man he had deemed so strong. Well, he did not know that any of the old Wentworths had met and conquered disgrace. He did not know that there had ever been a Wentworth called to face his kind with his own honour in ruins about him. But it had been a fighting line—and it culminated in him. And he would do battle.

The Green Flyer crossed the last little bridge under the hill marking the course of the San Antonio Creek, and swept out into a wide and sandy valley between high mountain ranges. It was bad going, but the good machine scarcely paused. It climbed Adobe Hill, now dry and dusty, and ran down fast toward the Wishing Tree—that stately sycamore standing beside the Ojai road in whose shadow Indian superstition places a spirit that is malevolent only on moonlight nights.

Wentworth smiled as he whirled by the tree. The old tale that no man might pass that tree on such a night without mishap went through his mind as quickly as the tree itself came, and was gone. Then the Green Flyer, for an instant, faced the Old Mission Bell that marks the running of the Camino Real of the Padres, and swept around the curve leading to the Casitas Pass bridge across the Ventura River—

and, suddenly, a man seemed to rise up in the middle of the road. He seemed, too, to stagger to get out of the way, but there was a dull crunching sound, he went down, and the front wheels passed over his body. At the same instant, so it seemed, there was a report like the discharge of a pistol; and the heavy car swerved, and wobbled, and all but went over.

Instinctively, Wentworth had thrown out the clutch. The Green Flyer, checked in its speed, staggered and stopped. In another moment the driver had leaped out, and was dragging the body of a man, unconscious, from between the front and rear wheels of the car.

"A dead man likely; and a punctured tire!" muttered Wentworth, straightening up. "Bad enough, for a starter! Lucky I got that extra tire in Los Angeles! But what the devil will I do with this fellow?"

He stood, for a moment, scratching his head, and looking on the body prostrate in the road. Then he knelt down, putting one hand upon the man's breast, and holding it there for a long time. He caught, at last, a faint pulsation, growing stronger, and rose to step over to the car and reach into the door pocket for his brandy flask.

"He lives!" Wentworth said, aloud. "Thank God!"

CHAPTER II

A FRIEND OUT OF THE DARK

HE WAS back again beside the prostrate man in a moment, just moistening his lips with a little of the liquor. There was the faintest fluttering of the man's eyelids as he did so, as Wentworth could see when he turned his flashlight into the other's face.

"He will come to himself, now," he said. "I wonder if he is badly hurt? And I wonder what evil chance brought him into the road of the Green Flyer just as I came around the curve?"

He straightened himself once more, standing above the man in the dust. His situation was serious enough, in all conscience. His own affairs called him to San Francisco, and that as speedily as might be. Yet here he was, hardly started on his way, his destination four hundred miles distant—held up by an injured man, he did not know how badly injured, and a punctured tire. The tire, of course, he could take care of. The injured man! How was he to be sure that he would not have to run down to Ventura, losing several hours, to get the help the man might need?

"All this," said Wentworth, at last, aloud, waving

his hands widely and with a manner of politeness, "comes of that Indian devil who lives in the tree!"

And then, just as he spoke, the man stirred a little, sat up, and tried to regain his feet, but was too weak for the moment. Wentworth caught a muttered question as he leaned down to help him rise.

"Did the—did the Indian hit anybody else, mate?" the man asked, putting his whole weight upon Wentworth's shoulder.

"The Indian?" Wentworth repeated, puzzled for a moment—and then smiled. "Oh, yes; he has hit me rather a facer. But you went down too suddenly to notice that."

The man had gathered himself together now, and stood away from the support of Wentworth's shoulder. He was a big, loose-jointed fellow with a straggling beard of a week's growth perhaps. His khaki coat and trousers were in tatters. There was about him, whether in the set of his clothes or in his carriage as he stood, a nameless suggestion of the salt sea. And his every line showed strength and muscular activity, as does the loose, shambling build of the panther. It is a kind of tense repression under a misfitting skin.

The man, as he stood, gathered his wits, slowly. He began to feel his body, tentatively, here and there, as though to try the muscles one after the other—arms first, and then legs and body. Wentworth thought, as he noted these actions, of the athlete in the ring who takes bodily account of himself be-

fore battle. And he thought that here was a gladiator who would put up a good man's fight, should occasion come. He realized, also, that he himself had a most vital interest in this self-appraisement of the wayfarer. For Wentworth was in a hurry. His own concerns called him. The Green Flyer needed his immediate attention. It was no light job to put on a new tire without efficient help. And here he might be held up with a badly injured man on his hands. And so it was with even more than the interest of the agent of the injury that he asked, seeing the big fellow feeling all his muscles:

"Anything seriously amiss?"

"Why, I think not, sir," replied the other, slowly, and then, with a half-foolish grin: "The Indian jarred me a bit, but nothing to hurt. And there do not seem to be any bones broken."

"Thank the Lord for that!" said Wentworth, fervently.

"Amen, sir!"

"All the same, I suppose you are pretty badly jarred," Wentworth said.

"That's right, sir," agreed the wayfarer. "I have had worse knocks in my time, but not many. You surely came around that corner with a rush, sir!"

"I was in something of a hurry," replied Wentworth, "and am yet. But I did not see you—until the car struck you."

"And I did not see you until I was struck, sir.

But I had heard your horn, two or three times, before that. It seemed a long way off, and I did not pay much attention."

"Next time you hear a horn at night, you would better keep out of the middle of the road," said Wentworth, smiling a little.

"Do they all rush through here like bats out of Hades?" asked the wayfarer, grinning in his turn.

"They are apt to, when they are running at this time in the night. But, as long as you are not badly hurt, I suppose there is not a great deal of harm done. And I am still in a hurry."

He turned toward the Green Flyer as he spoke, opening the tool chest and taking out his jack and the hand air pump. It was a rear tire that had been punctured. Working like an expert, Wentworth jacked up the axle and in a moment was busily engaged in taking off the injured tire, the wayfarer standing by, still tentatively feeling of his muscles.

"I am something of a mechanic, sir," he said, at last. "What is it that has carried away?"

"Tire punctured!" replied Wentworth, briefly. "Know anything about these machines?"

"Not a thing, sir. But I am strong—and two can do any job quicker than one; where both are willing."

He stooped beside Wentworth as he spoke, and his greater strength was applied to the loosening of the tire so effectively that it came away very quickly. In another moment the new tire had been taken from

the rack on the running board of the Green Flyer, adjusted in place, and the pump brought into action. Here, once more, the greater strength of the stranger showed itself—although Wentworth was himself an athlete. More quickly than the thing had ever been done before with the Green Flyer, the tire was hard and tested, and Wentworth had gathered his tools and thrown them back into the chest.

"And now," he said, preparing to crank the Green Flyer, "what is to be done with you?"

"Haven't you done enough to me?" asked the wayfarer at this, in a kind of whimsical tone. "Want me to stand up in the road and be hit again?"

Wentworth laughed at this and it did him good. "I did not mean that," he said, at last. "But if you are badly hurt, it would be my duty to take you to the hospital at Ventura—and that would mean delay, when I am in a great hurry."

"You need not bother about me," said the other, earnestly. "I am not hurt at all, only jarred a little. And I will shape my course to the next port, just the same as I would have done if I had not met you —and the Indian, sir."

"Did you expect to find a port here in the mountains?" asked Wentworth.

"Why, no, sir; but they told me that this was the road to Santa Barbara, and I was making a course that way. Of course I could not make the same way that you make in the machine here, and so I was casting about for a place to turn in and get a bit of

sleep, when you came along so fast that I could not get out of the way."

Wentworth cranked the machine, and came back to step into the driver's seat. The man puzzled him a little, although it was of course plain enough that he was a seafarer. But there was that about him which led Wentworth to think, somehow, that he was from a position aft the mast—not a common sailor. If that impression were well founded, what had turned the man into a tramp? Seafaring men with officers' papers were not found in the ranks of tramps ashore; at least not often. And they seldom showed the hard usage that was evident in the appearance of this stranger. Wentworth turned, his foot on the running board, as he would have stepped into the car.

"What did you leave your ship for, anyway?" he asked, plumping the question at the other suddenly.

"My ship?" parried the stranger. It was clear enough that he did not like the question.

"Sure! Your ship? You are a sailor, plain enough. Why did you turn hobo, then? You will never succeed at that trade."

"Too many Indians about, eh, sir?"

"Well, too many Indians, and motor cars. It is sometimes difficult for a man unused to shore roads to keep out of the way."

"I don't much believe I ever will make a go of this business of tramping ashore," admitted the stranger.

"Of course you won't. But why did you leave your ship?"

The sailor saw that it was useless to fence any more. "That is rather a long story, sir," he replied. "But she was hell ship, in a perfectly polite way, sir. That is, the Captain in her was a devil—a kid-gloved devil—expecting the mates to do his dirty work, and seeing that they did it. And I dropped over the side one night, down in Pedro, and swam for it. Then, because I must strike away from that port, first I began to tramp it, heading up for Santa Barbara, where I might get a coaster to San Francisco. And here I am. But the land is harder than the sea, sir, at that."

"This is your first try at tramping it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Got any money?"

"No, sir, and no dunnage. Of course I forfeited my pay when I went over the side—and left all my clothes aboard."

"How did you live?"

"Well, a woman put me to chopping wood for my breakfast this morning, back there in Ventura—and I lifted a few carrots out of a field along the road. But it was slim picking, and they keep a lot of big dogs in this country. A fellow isn't safe to walk anywhere but along the railroad track."

"I don't suppose you want me to carry you back to Ventura?" asked Wentworth, tentatively.

"No, sir; that would not gain me anything. I

will just cast about here a bit for a barn or shed of some kind, and, if the dog will let me in, will make shift to sleep this watch out."

Wentworth smiled a little. "What is your name?" he asked.

"Felix McGreal, sir."

It was so plainly an honest answer that Wentworth accepted it at once.

"You say that you want to get to Santa Barbara?" was the next question.

"I stand a chance to get a coaster out of there for San Francisco," replied McGreal.

"You would not have done better to stay in San Pedro; would it not be better, even now, for you to head back that way?"

"They would have hauled me up for a deserter, as long as the ship was there, sir. She is gone, now; and to San Francisco, at that. But she will be out of there before ever I can make a landfall on the Bay. And a man stands a better chance of a ship in the north. Pedro is not much more than a coastwise port, sir, when all is said."

"Hm!" exclaimed Wentworth. "My present course runs to San Francisco. You are sure you are not badly hurt?"

"Certain sure, sir."

Wentworth was seated at the wheel of the Green Flyer and the engine was purring, impatient to be away. "Jump into the tonneau, there," he said. "It is the duty of one poor man to help another, and I owe

you a good turn, anyway. I will take you with me."

The sailor walked around to the opposite side of the Green Flyer and stepped into the vacant seat beside the driver.

"It isn't seemly that I should man the quarter-deck when the skipper is forward," he said.

"Well, the front seat rides easier," said Wentworth, with a smile.

CHAPTER III

THE FACE OF THE WORLD

THE Green Flyer started ahead very smoothly and easily. The next moment she was sweeping, with wild shrieks, around the sharp curves under the dark shadows of the oaks that line the beautiful Casitas Pass Road. Trees and the overhanging limbs of trees started out of the darkness ahead in the glare of the lights, came up fast, and dropped behind among the shadows. Chuck holes in the roadway yawned in front of the machine like wide chasms, and smoothed themselves into the general level of the dust as the lightly running car skimmed over them.

The two men in the car passed one or two dark farmhouses, seen dimly under the shelter of the trees, and once a belated farmer pulled his terrified horses in close to a high bank to let them whizz by. Wentworth heard him shout a curse as the Green Flyer flashed along, almost grazing the hind wheels of his spring wagon, and was amused to see the sailor lean far out and send astern of them a stream of the easy-running profanity of the sea.

And then they had passed the first summit of the Casitas Pass, and the second; and run swiftly down

the narrow cañon of Casitas Creek into the broad and fertile orchard lands of the Carpenteria Valley. Santa Barbara went by in the night, blinking with a thousand electric lights, and the long, steep pass of Gaviota, and the wind-swept reaches that lie beyond Point Concepcion. They saw the sea break white there in the waning moonlight; and the red rim of Santa Rosa Island lying behind them across the channel in the pathway of the dawn.

They breakfasted, very early, at the hotel of Paso Robles, under the spreading white oaks, and then ran down the long valley of Soledad and the Salinas to come into the low hills that would open to them the Santa Clara Valley and the San Francisco Bay region. Neither slept all through the night, and, as the day strengthened, sending over the mountains a flood of imperial purple sunshine, they fell into desultory talk although for the most part both seemed to have enough of thought to keep them silent. It was in one of these scraps of talk that Wentworth, harping back to how the other had happened to turn tramp, said to the sailor:

"What was the story of leaving your ship?"

"She was a hell ship, sir; every way."

"A hell ship? I have heard of hell ships. The Captain beat you, I suppose, and the food was poor, and all the rest of it?"

"The food was bad enough, sir. And she was black-birding, and contraband trading, and fifty things against the law. There was none of us in any

way particular about small matters so long as we did not have to take the blame for anything but obeying orders. And the Captain did not beat me. I was the second mate in her, d'ye see, sir! But that Captain was a kid-gloved devil, with the capacity for murder in his soul, and it is my opinion that no man could go officer in that ship who was not willing to take the same burden on himself. I couldn't do all he wanted anyway, sir."

"So you left him, and turned tramp to get another ship? I suppose you will make it in San Francisco, all right. But you must know by this that a sailor has no place on shore roads."

"Not with Indian devils and gasolene devils loose in the moonlight, sir."

Wentworth laughed, giving the wheel a quick turn to miss a boulder. "The Captain wanted you to abuse the sailors, I suppose?" he said.

"That was part of it—although he was a full hand at that himself, sir."

"What ship was it?"

"She was a steamer, a tramp out of Glasgow. The *Halcyon*."

"And the master's name?"

"Captain Robert Graeme, sir."

"She is not in Pedro now, you say?"

"No, sir; she sailed for the north a week ago. And that was a start on a cruise of a kind that I want no hand in, sir."

"What kind?" asked Wentworth.

"That's the story, sir. It was the old man's affair. He told me a part of it, but it was only because he must keep his own hands clean when it came to the actual devil's doings. He needed help, but he had to get another man for that job, anyhow. I do not mind lifting a carrot out of a field, now and again; and maybe I might go so far as to pick up a chicken, if the roost were handy, and no dogs about. And when it is owner's orders I am not above standing in for a tropic island and taking a load of niggers to the sugar mills, if that comes in the day's work. But the helping away of wholesale robbers with the loot of women and children is not my game, sir."

A wild thought crossed Wentworth's mind for a second—and went the way of most wild thoughts. After that, he did not pursue the matter of the sailor's tale, and silence fell in the car. The Green Flyer swept on. At San José they got the San Francisco morning papers, and Wentworth took time to glance at the headlines while the car's tank was being filled at a roadside garage. They told him plenty in that one glance to give him a bracer for the battle that opened for him that day—the battle whose field he was so swiftly approaching.

The sailor, McGreal, scanned the papers more closely, holding the sheets before him for many miles after the car was started on its way once more. Wentworth smiled a little grimly, noting this, but he said nothing. McGreal, like all the world, had his interest in the great defaulter. If Wentworth

likewise noticed that the sailor ventured no comment on the matter that he read with such interest, it was not for him to open the subject. The Green Flyer was running very swiftly, and the mahout might well be busy with his car.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, nineteen hours out from the Ojai, the Green Flyer rolled through the doors of that public garage in lower Golden Gate Avenue which Wentworth had theretofore favoured with his casual patronage when he did not want to take the car home.

"Hullo, Mr. Wentworth!" cried the proprietor, coming forward and rubbing his hands together. That was John Wentworth's very first meeting with this Chinese form of salutation in his own city. Many fair-weather friends would shake their own hands, from that time forward, in place of shaking his. And there was a sting in it the first time.

Wentworth saw, also, that the two or three dissolute looking loungers about the place started at the mention of his name, looked at him, and then looked away again quickly. But he did not see that the sailor, McGreal, turned and gave him one swift glance. It all passed in a second.

"Hullo, Sprocket!" he said, answering the proprietor very quickly, after his own manner.

"Shall I put up the Green Flyer, sir?" asked Sprocket.

"For the present. I won't want the car again this afternoon. And I will send for the things."

"Brooks, sir?"

"No. The hotel people will come for them, likely."

"Had a long drive, sir?"

"Four hundred miles. From Ventura."

"And the car never heated, sir. I heard you were in the south."

"Yes; the town seems to have been pretty well advised as to my movements—up to last night."

Wentworth had stepped out of the car and started for the street as he spoke. McGreal followed him. One of the loungers, as they passed through the big doors, fairly leaped for the telephone booth, and the sailor coming back to get one of the morning papers from the tonneau saw the action. McGreal heard the man in the booth ask for a newspaper office, and went out again at once, overtaking Wentworth at the corner of Polk Street. He touched him on the shoulder as he came close to him.

"I suppose that we go about, each on his own course, here, sir," he said, as Wentworth turned quickly to face him.

"Why, yes," agreed Wentworth. He put his hand in his pocket as he spoke, and took out a five-dollar gold piece, which he handed to the sailor. "That will see you to a ship," he said.

"Yes, sir; thank you!" replied McGreal.

"And so, good-bye!" Wentworth went on. "I suppose it isn't any use to warn you again against the hobo business. You must know you can never succeed in that trade. As we part courses, I will

wish you luck, and hope that you will keep to a trade that you can make a go of."

"And I wish you luck, sir," the sailor said. "I thank you for everything, sir; and, if you would let me make a suggestion, Mr. Wentworth, take a new lodging. Do not go home to-night."

"Why?"

"I saw one of those seedy chaps in the auto dock jump for a telephone as soon as we left the place and the connection he asked for was a newspaper office, sir."

It seemed to Wentworth that the sailor looked at him somewhat wistfully as he spoke, as if he would have said something more, and did not exactly know how to go about the saying of it. But the impression —it was no more than an impression—passed. He shook hands with McGreal, thanked him, and turned away.

"So! So!" he exclaimed to himself. "They are on my track already! Well, my sailor friend, I did not come here to hide. The sooner the hounds find me, the better I will like it."

CHAPTER IV

THERE ARE BAD PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD

WENTWORTH walked rapidly down Golden Gate Avenue, leaped on a car at Market Street, and rode, standing amidst the crowd in the open part, to the corner of Montgomery. He could catch glimpses of the flaring headlines of the evening papers being read by the people in the car—headlines telling the story of the bank failure. The men in the crowd about him spoke of it, in disconnected fashion, after the manner of men in crowds. It seemed as if the whole atmosphere of the city were full of it.

And, indeed, San Francisco had reason to be interested in the smash of the great bank. The failure had been for millions and there were more than hints of dishonour in it. Elliot Wentworth, a pillar of high finance on the Pacific Coast and in the nation, philanthropist and reputed plutocrat, was gone. The thousand stricken with poverty because of his going had not even the satisfaction of facing him, man to man, to cry their losses.

It had been his daily habit, after banking hours, to take a dip in the bay, patronizing a certain bathing establishment at North Beach where he had his

own locker. That day of the failure, leaving the bank at noon, a full three hours before his usual time, he had gone straight to the beach, put on his bathing suit, dived from the end of the short pier fronting the house, and struck out toward Alcatraz. The tide was then running out like a river, but he was a strong swimmer, and known to be. Nothing was thought of that, therefore.

The bath house keeper attempted an exchange of pleasantries with the banker as had been the habit between them, rallying Wentworth on his early visit. And the man remembered, afterward, that Wentworth had regarded him after the manner of a man dazed and had replied to him strangely.

"The sea calls me!" he had cried, looking back over his shoulder as he swam away, borne swiftly the while by the tide running out to sea. "I must find myself—out there!"

Down in the city, after the business men had lunched with their usual fever and hurry, rumour got about. Men asked for Wentworth and none knew where to find him. There were meetings of directorates where he was due and did not appear. At about two, or possibly a little before that hour, the first edition of the *Bulletin* came out. The keeper of the bath house at North Beach telephoned police headquarters a few minutes later.

Within an incredibly short time the *Bulletin* came out with an extra. Ten minutes after that, Bush and Pine streets all below Kearny were blocked by

shouting, gesticulating crowds of madmen. The Stock Market had closed for the day at noon, but the brokers gathered on the curb, and mining shares went crashing down. Everything was thrown away! Thousands were ruined. Other thousands saw themselves saved only by the circumstance that the banks closed early.

There was a run on the Bank of the Pacific, and nothing but the coming of the usual closing hour saved the institution for that day. The directors were summoned hastily. The bank's vaults were found absolutely bare of coin save for the few thousands used in the daily transactions. Securities that should have counted for millions were gone, none could tell whither. Nothing could be done to prevent the next day's disaster, and only the efforts of a score of policemen kept back the yelling maniacs who seemed about to tear the massive building stone from stone when the heavy bronze doors were closed for the night in the faces of the crowd. The city went to bed that night in such deep gloom as might have followed another earthquake disaster. Indeed, it was a deeper gloom. There was a certain grim kind of humour in the mood after the earthquake.

It seemed to John Wentworth, alone in the crowd on that car, that the atmosphere of the failure was pressing upon him, smothering him. It would have been a relief, at the moment, to meet a man he knew, to stand up and make a physical effort against the moral force that was bearing him down. But at

that hour there would be no one he knew on a car bound toward the ferries. His world was going up town to the Club, pulsing along the lighted streets toward the haunts of the pleasure loving.

He must begin his fight as soon as he could, facing the world on behalf of that father who was so strangely gone; and he would begin it with his father's lawyer, who was likewise the attorney for the bank and likely to have retained that connection by preference. The lawyer, ordinarily at his home on Pacific Heights at that hour of the day, would, in the present stress, be more likely, Wentworth felt, to stay late at his office.

Leaving the car at the corner of Montgomery, Wentworth strode along that narrow thoroughfare toward the lofty Mills Building. He was in the financial district now. He rubbed shoulders, as he made his way against the set of the crowd, with many men who knew him. Some of these even stopped, for a second or two, to look after him as he plunged along. But he had drawn his cap over his eyes, dressing his soul for battle, and had picked the field on which he would fight. He walked swiftly, with bent head, intent on pushing forward against the keen wind that set along the street from the northwest, bearing ghostly streamers of fog that were only partly distinguishable from the dust clouds whirling before it. And so he saw nobody.

Once he was hailed. A youngster, aping the real men who swam along the Cocktail Route every even-

ing, and who had been a teller in the bank, paused on entering the elaborately scrolled screen doors of a saloon to shout his name, and an invitation to drink. But Wentworth only looked backward, waved his hand, and went on.

As he had surmised, the big suite of offices of Chester, Wiley & Chester, occupying the entire seventh floor of the Mills Building, was alight, alive, and busy. The boy in the anteroom took his card, and came back almost at once to inform him that Mr. Chester the elder, Mr. William Chester, was within and would see him. As he had been there often, and knew the way, Wentworth then passed through the door leading to the corridor from which opened the private offices of the firm. He was going straight to Mr. William Chester's particular den when the old gentleman himself came out quickly and led him into another room, one of the consultation rooms of the firm.

Wentworth was close enough to the door of the old lawyer's private office as that gentleman came out to catch a glimpse of a group of men seated there in some sort of conference. Several of them he knew —elderly men who had been his father's financial and social intimates, men whose names were a power in the money world and of weight in the Pacific Union Club.

Then the door was closed, and in another moment Wentworth found himself alone in an apartment with Mr. Chester. The lawyer was a short, cold,

gray man—he might have been sixty or more—clean shaven, perfectly appointed, with a waxy white face that was like a stone mask. You would have said that Father Time must have taken a sharp chisel to grave the lines in it, and at that, the lines were few, and not deeply graven. And yet, despite its lack of lines, the face was not devoid of expression. It was not a kindly face, certainly. Nothing that came from it, no ray from the cold gray eyes nor any trembling geniality in the thin lips or the firm chin, touched any chord of human sympathy. But neither was it coldly repellent. It was the face of a man who bade the world stand and give the countersign.

It was entirely characteristic of this man that he did not offer to shake hands with his young visitor. He sat down in a revolving chair behind a flat-topped desk standing in the room to which he had led Wentworth, and, being thus entrenched after his customary fashion, motioned toward another chair for his caller.

"I hardly looked for you until to-morrow," he said.

"I got your wire at the Foothills last night, sir," replied Wentworth, "and came up in my car at once."

"Ah!"

Wentworth was young, and not easily chilled. The monosyllable and the stone face might have stopped an older man. He made a desperate effort to get past it.

"Oh, Mr. Chester!" he cried. "My father! Tell me everything, sir!"

It was a pity that, the son of his father, he lacked the countersign. It may have been a pity, too, that his father had not at the last possessed the means of enlisting on the side of the lawyer, or tried to enlist the lawyer on his. The coldest man living has his vanity.

"You have read the newspapers, I suppose?" said the lawyer, coldly.

"I have seen them, sir."

"I would recommend them to your careful perusal. Their accounts of what happened are pretty complete —and fairly accurate."

Wentworth felt the repulse. But he would not be dashed—not yet.

"You were my father's lawyer, Mr. Chester," he said, with a touch of manly reproach. "You wired me of this disaster. And I have come to you!"

"It is true that your father retained me through many years. But a client who withholds confidence betrays his attorney, sir."

"That is a serious charge, Mr. Chester. And do you know nothing of my father?"

Wentworth, regarding the lawyer closely, was not quite sure but that a faint smile crossed the stone face at his question. It was no more than a breath crossing a mirror.

"No more than the dead—or the sea!" replied the lawyer.

It was baffling, still, Wentworth would not give up.

"If my father is dead," he said, solemnly, "it was the hand of God in this thing. I will never believe that he swam out into the sea with no purpose to come back."

Again across the lawyer's face there flickered that faint suggestion of a smile, the breath upon the mirror. When he spoke, after that, Wentworth fancied that there was in his tone just a hint of pity.

"Men incline," said Mr. Chester, "to credit God with many a neat stroke of the devil's handiwork. But I have nothing to do with your beliefs, Mr. Wentworth; and the world will hold to its own. A command may come from the grave, sir! It is usually better to let dead men lie."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Wentworth, half starting up.

The lawyer sat for a moment, regarding him keenly. In those crises when it becomes professional to cut the heart out of a man, the operator may well pause at the start to contemplate with some care the making of the first incision. When Mr. Chester spoke again there was a cold precision in his voice that told Wentworth every word was well considered —and was believed by the speaker to be irrefutable.

"Your father," he said, "is gone. I believe—and I knew him better than any man living, although of late years I have reason to know that he kept much from me—that when he struck out from that pier at the North Beach bathing establishment he did not mean to come back. Ten millions in securities,

that were supposed to lie safely in the vaults of the Bank of the Pacific, are gone likewise. Where those securities are we know no more than we know whereabouts in the dark seas that run about the Heads outside the Bay the beaten body of Elliot Wentworth may be tossing at this moment.

"The securities that I speak of seem to have been thrown into the financial sea long, long ago. That could not have been done without the privity and—— Keep your seat, young man!" For Wentworth had made as if to rise.

"That could not have been done without the privity, the dishonest privity, of the President of the Bank of the Pacific. You have said that I was your father's lawyer. For many years .I was. I may have been led to think that I was, up to the last. But I have found that, latterly, he took other advice than mine. Do you think that I would advise a client to forge, sir, and to steal? Your father, it has been found, was in the mining stock market much more heavily and for many more years than anybody supposed. I never advised a man to speculate in stocks in my life, young man. And it was only when a demand was made for a great part of the securities now missing, to finance a big industrial project, that discovery became inevitable—and the crash came. I would recommend you to leave it at that."

After that one start to repel the arraignment of his father, Wentworth bowed his head in his hands and heard the lawyer out in silence. Mr. Chester

spoke coldly and without any trace of passion. The very manner of his speaking was calculated to carry conviction. The despair of youth, swift as youth's recovery from despair, bowed the younger man down. Yet he made no more effort.

"But my father had many large interests!" he said.

"None that would save the situation. Even those that he had are in the formative stage: a new hotel, an electric railway still building, a great power project. These must all be financed, and heavily, to be carried through to any one's profit. Your father began many things—and completed few."

"There is nothing left, then, sir?"

"Less than nothing. But I may say that I am authorized, as to yourself——"

"I was not thinking of myself," interrupted Wentworth.

"Nevertheless, it seems to me that that is the most important thing for you to think of, at the moment. Others have given you some thought, sir! Your fortunes were a subject of discussion among the gentlemen in my room even as you came in."

"The gentlemen in your room, sir?"

"The Directors of the Bank of the Pacific, yes. It was their idea that you would be permitted to finish at Berkeley, if you liked, and would then be given work in the bank—or in some equally eligible situation."

"The bank?" queried Wentworth. He was all at sea.

"The Bank of the Pacific," explained Mr. Chester. "They propose to come forward with the millions necessary to rehabilitate it. The decision is not half an hour old. The bank could not be permitted to go down. That would be a disaster national in scope. This action of the Directors is merely that of men who run to fight a fire. Of course there will be heavy losses by depositors and trust funds—or, rather, there will be delay in settlements. But the situation will be saved."

"The bank will reopen, then?"

"To-morrow morning. There is no secret about it. The newspapers will have the statements to-night. Your late father's enterprises go into the pot with the rest."

"I should have supposed that. And the gentlemen who do all this would make my fortunes their care, likewise?"

Wentworth could not have told what it was that prompted the bitterness in his words. But he was beginning to feel something of the recovery of youth. Indeed, he was still over-young to question the motives of any man. He may merely have desired, instinctively, to stand alone.

"They could not well do otherwise," said Mr. Chester. "You must live—and make your living. And most of these men liked your father. That liking would prompt them to give you a chance."

"I think I would rather make my living somewhere

else than behind the counter of the bank," said Wentworth.

"That is, perhaps, a natural feeling. I dare say there will be other clerkships to be found, after you shall have finished with your schooling."

"I have finished with my schooling," said Wentworth, rising as he spoke. "And I mean, sir, to take my future into my own hands."

"It isn't much to take!" murmured the lawyer—as if rather to himself.

"Little or much, it is mine," replied Wentworth. If Mr. Chester, who should have known the fighting blood of the Wentworths, wanted to rouse it to action, he had taken a very sure way. But it may be that he only indulged the lawyer's passion for playing upon a human instrument."

"You reject the help of your father's friends?" he asked.

"Oh, my father's—friends? Yes, sir."

"You will at least go in and see these gentlemen?"

"What is the good of quarrelling with a crowd when I have been sufficiently accommodated by one, sir? Their time is valuable! Why waste it on me? I know what I do not want, at least."

"I am to assume that you will take—your fortunes—away from San Francisco?" queried the lawyer.

Wentworth leaped to his feet, starting to leave the office. "You may assume whatever you like, sir," he said, "but it is my purpose to fight the battle out on this field."

CHAPTER V

AND, LIKEWISE, THERE ARE GOOD PEOPLE

BUT it was not written that Wentworth should fight his battle in San Francisco, firm as his purpose was to do that when he left the lawyer's office. He turned and passed out through the door of the consultation room, and so on across the anteroom into the main hallway of the big building. He was not sure, by the time he had tramped down six flights of stairs to the street—the elevators having stopped running—that matters were altogether so hopeless as the lawyer had represented.

But he had no more than the resiliency natural to youth as a basis for this recovery of faith. He had never, really, become well acquainted with his father. Once, several years before, the elder Wentworth had been seriously hurt about the head in an auto accident in the Park. He had been carried home unconscious and his son called hastily from his college duties to his bedside. The papers had been full of the accident at the time—a financial magnate of the size of the President of the Bank of the Pacific could not be thus stricken without causing something of a flurry. Young Wentworth had sat beside his father's sick bed through that illness, and the elder man had

presently come back to what had seemed to be complete recovery. The incident had long ago passed entirely out of young Wentworth's mind. For the rest, there were just the two of them in the big marble palace on Pacific Heights. The elder man was buried in gold, the younger absorbed in the more healthful preoccupations of youth. There had always been plenty of everything in the house, especially money; but that is not good ground for father and son to meet on if they come together on no other. But Elliot Wentworth had lost his wife when the boy was born, and at that loss had immersed himself the more deeply in financial affairs. Possibly the loss had turned him against the child, subconsciously. There are such strange mysteries in human relationships. Young Wentworth, at all events, had grown to manhood almost in his own way —and, with manhood, came honour. He could not, having honour himself, believe his father devoid of it.

Of course, if there had been dishonour, he could understand how there should also be inevitable death. Little as he had known his father, he had known him to be a proud man, and sensitive. Maybe, if he had been less proud and self-contained, the elder man might have touched his son's life more nearly. But the fact that Wentworth held to his faith in his father's honour, after the first effect of the lawyer's relation wore off, made him reject—not the fact of death, for that seemed beyond doubt—but the theory of suicide.

It would be a part of his work in life, therefore, to rehabilitate the good name of his father. This much, at least, had been clear to his mind when he rejected, on his own behalf, the help of the men who had determined to reopen the bank. If he did clear his father's name it must be at somebody's expense. Whatever part they might have had in wrecking the bank—if any of them had a part—the men who were to open a new bank on the ruins of the old one could have no sympathy with any such purpose as he cherished. If any of them had had any part in wrecking the bank, Wentworth's purpose would be one which they would stop at nothing to defeat.

It was a maze as yet, and Wentworth was groping somewhat blindly in it—but, if his father had been driven to his ruin, the driver or drivers must have been big in the world of finance. A man of his father's stamp could not be cast into the abyss save to the profit of somebody, and it might well chance that the driver, having seen the father ruined, would be willing or even anxious to help the son to live. It is not the government alone that keeps a conscience fund.

These thoughts formed themselves vaguely as Wentworth plunged along Montgomery Street now with only the wind and fog for company, and turned into a place he knew in order to get the evening papers and the last details of the calamity in which he was involved. That much of Mr. Chester's talk had been sound, anyhow. He must know all that there was to know of the catastrophe.

It was a place on the Cocktail Route that he entered, about the first station; and so, of course, the current setting up town had swept the crowd on an hour before. The one man left on the late watch—which might catch a stray sailorman from the front or a belated Oaklander hurrying to the ferry, no more than that—knew him and greeted him.

"How do, Mr. Wentworth?" said the barkeeper, extending his hand across the bar, and smoothing down his white apron.

It often happens that a barkeeper's hand is the last held out to a falling man and the first to a rising.

"Hullo, Charlie! Make me a cocktail, will you? And I would like to look at the evening papers."

There was a row of little stalls along one side of the place that could be shut in by red plush curtains swung from brass rods, and into one of these Wentworth went, sinking on the red plush seat beside the mahogany table that took up most of the space. The evening papers lay spread out there, left by the last occupant. On the top of the pile was the *Bulletin*, a scare headline right away across the top of the first page, and following it a full story of the financial disaster and the tragedy of the fate of Elliot Wentworth. It was a plain tale, plainly set down. The most fervid reporter had no need to draw on his imagination to heighten interest in a story like that.

Wentworth was sitting with his head upon his hands, reading the tale, when the barkeeper came across softly, and placed the red drink at his elbow.

The man did not go away again at once. The two were alone in the place, and the barkeeper was stirred by the practical sympathy of the poor. Also, he had been a loser by the failure of the bank. Wentworth, looking up for a moment, saw the kindness in the servitor's eye, and smiled at him. It needed no more than that.

"This is hell, Mr. Wentworth, ain't it?" said the barkeeper.

"And then some!" Wentworth replied, and went back to his newspaper.

He rose, at last, knowing all of the story that the world knew. Crossing to the bar, where the barkeeper was busily polishing glasses, whistling softly as he worked, Wentworth said, "Make me another cocktail, Charlie—and one for yourself!"

The man mixed the drinks at once, and they drank. Then Charlie said, as they set down their glasses, "Have one on the house, sir?"

"No more, thanks," replied Wentworth.

"Well," said Charlie, sighing as he put the glasses away, "this is hell, Mr. Wentworth, ain't it? I lose five hundred bones, myself, on the play!"

"I am sorry for that," replied Wentworth. "I have lost everything."

"I know!" said the barkeeper. "It is a pretty hard deal—and, say, Mr. Wentworth, it ain't much, but if a twenty or so should come anyways handy, I've always got it in the safe, here."

"Thanks, old man," replied Wentworth. "After

all, there are many good people in the world. I will remember. And so, good-night!"

"Good-night!" replied the barkeeper. "But this is hell, ain't it?"

He went back to wiping glasses, whistling softly. Wentworth passed out into the fog of the night, caught a Sutter Street car, and transferred to Polk for Pacific Heights. But he might as well have spared himself that trouble. The marble palace of the Wentworths' was already boarded up, front door and windows, and the caretaker whom he aroused at last in the back premises looked upon him clearly with the gravest suspicion.

"You may be young Mr. Wentworth," the old woman said, peering out at him from the servants' door—she only opened it the least little way—"but it's a queer time o' night to be comin' 'round. That's all I says!"

Then she slammed the door in his face. He heard it bolted on the inside, moreover. He had not thought about the house being closed up so quickly, but, on reflection, saw that it was natural enough that it should be. The house servants would go at the first hint of calamity. Rats do not abide a ship that is about to founder—Chinese rats, least of all. And, of course, he could not blame the caretaker for not knowing him.

If he was to be permitted to look at his father's papers, and allowed to get some things left in his own room, he could procure an order the next day from

whoever had control of the place. Moreover, it occurred to him, at this moment, that he was faint; that he had eaten nothing since morning. And he must have a place where he could stay the night.

Old habits being still strong, he caught the next car that passed on the way down town, transferred to Sutter, and took a room at the St. Francis. As he registered, he asked the clerk to have his steamer trunk and suitcases sent for from the garage in Golden Gate Avenue, and then he turned and went downstairs to the grill.

And he found himself seated at a small table, meant to accommodate two, shaking hands across the white cloth with Fred Upson, a fraternity brother of last year who had taken honours at Hastings Law School and was just beginning to attract some notice at the Bar.

CHAPTER VI

A NEW WAY OF LIFE

"GOD bless you, John Wentworth!" cried Upson as he gripped the other. "God bless you!"

Wentworth smiled, a bit wearily. "He would seem to have been doing rather the other thing," he replied.

"Nonsense! Take a brace, man!"

And Wentworth did draw himself together. The hearty manner of this friend was a tonic as the friendliness of the barkeeper had been. Indeed, there were good people in the world—more good than bad.

"I think I can fight," he said, with a firmer setting of the lips.

"Of course you can fight. You have got to fight!"

Upson knew all that the world knew of the failure of the Bank of the Pacific—and the tragedy. He was to get, now, something of a more intimate knowledge of the affair from Wentworth's relation of the meeting with Mr. Chester. And he made the lawyer's natural comment on John's tale of his talk with his father's legal representative.

"Man," he exclaimed, "there is something behind it!"

It was the crystallization into clarity of the chaos of Wentworth's own thoughts.

"There is something behind it," he agreed. "But what?"

"You knew nothing of your father's affairs?" queried Upson.

"Nothing."

"Nor of his business associates—and associations?"

"Not much more than everyone knew. The big guns of Pine Street used to come to the house occasionally. He frequented the Pacific Union Club, and I suppose found them all there. If there was one that seemed closer than another, it was old Harran, but I do not know that he was much closer. Chester sometimes seemed to be more intimate. The papers were always full of the doings of the Wentworth crowd on 'Change, or of the Baldwin crowd, or the Harran crowd. My father, I gathered, was more nearly identified with the Harran lot than with any other—although I never seriously gave the thing much thought—for the Harran crowd and the Wentworth seemed frequently to be made by the newspaper fellows to mean the same thing. Harran was always a big man at the bank. I saw him, among others, when I caught a glimpse of the lot in Chester's office. But the whole world of money is like a great kaleidoscope to me, turning and shifting."

"As to the rest of us," agreed Upson. "You merely saw the shining colours as they changed."

"And took joy in them," said Wentworth.

"Naturally! You could reach out and seize any colour that you fancied. The balance of us must be content to look through the tube—and keep hands off."

"That was about the size of it," said Wentworth.

"Well," said Upson, after a little silence, "it took some considerable manipulation to keep the colours constantly changing. I suppose you always understood that?"

"I suppose that I did. But I am not conscious of ever having thought much about it."

"You would not, the whole game being so much a matter of every day," said Upson. "Your father's hand was probably doing most of the manipulating, during all the time after you were old enough to take notice. But there seems to have come a hand, at last, that snatched the tube away from his, and then he was thrown on the screen among the atoms, and winked out."

Wentworth had steadied, more and more, as they talked. Moreover, the dinner had begun to move across the table in orderly procession, and the sanity of this presentation of food, as much as the strengthening quality of the viands themselves, refreshed him.

"You mean that it was necessary to eliminate my father in someone's interest?" he asked.

"Exactly that. He stood in the way of some predatory plutocrat's accumulation of more millions.

His wide operations, sooner or later, would lay him open to the squeeze. Your father, my boy, had something of the plunger's reputation—in the large, constructive way. The stronger hand closed on him at the chance, and he went out."

"That may all be true," said Wentworth, musingly.

"It is true," Upson asserted, with conviction.

"And whose was the stronger hand?"

"I do not know enough of your father's concerns to justify a conclusion. For choice, if I were to hazard a guess, I would say Harran's."

"People have told me that I was like my father," said Wentworth. "I did not know him well enough to be certain that that was the fact. But I do not believe that any loss of money would drive me to death."

"Do you know that your father is dead?" asked Upson.

"Do you realize what is implied by that question?" flashed Wentworth.

"Not what you seem to think," replied Upson, as quickly.

"It is death—or dishonour, Fred. God help me, it may be both!"

The shadow with which Wentworth had been struggling for a day and a night rose, darkly, to confront him. But he fought it away. "I will not believe it!" he cried. "I will not believe it!"

"And you need not," said Upson. "Look here,

John! Your father was a promoter, therefore a man sanguine by temperament, and imaginative, in other words, a dreamer. Every great promoter is a dreamer. And the man who succeeds at the trade is the man who makes his dreams come true. He builds in the world of high finance, and his building tools are men and money. Your father was carried, say, a thought beyond himself in one of his great constructive dreams. There may have been some accidental slip, some sudden contingency whose liability to occur was overlooked and not provided for. He may have been tempted. God alone knows! We all are, at times."

He fell silent for a moment, while the other sat watching him.

"And then?" asked Wentworth.

"He may have been tempted. The world, John, is a wild beasts' den. I tell you that, as a lawyer. I have seen the beasts in it with their masks off."

"I do not believe that all men are bad," protested Wentworth. Even amidst the darkness in which he was groping, he would not go that far."

"Believe what you like—but listen! The world is a den of wild beasts; or, if you prefer it that way, the world of money is a den of wild beasts. They are more ravenous in that world than in any other, anyhow. I grant you that, freely. The dreamer was in the den among the beasts, and laid himself in some way open to attack from the most ferocious of them. We cannot tell what weakened joint there

may have been in the dreamer's armour. You say that your father recovered completely from the effect of his injury in that automobile accident—but, did he? You have no more than the word of a doctor and his own apparent recovery to go upon. And we are dealing with that subtlest of all things, the human brain! Did the beasts find the flaw, and pierce the armour? We must manage to learn that, somehow.

"That your father fought against his foes, and fought manfully, I do not doubt. That he fought to lose, the whole world knows. I believe that, knowing where he was weak, they leaped upon the dreamer to devour him. That he may have been led, in the desperation of his resistance and in his weakness, to do the thing too much, is at least possible. And then, awakened, he fell into the dreamer's panic. He would fear, as he ran, that everything was gone; that all that was left for him was to get away, to hide from the world. Later—and when he might even deem it too late—he would come to see that he could still have stayed and fought; that this or that chance to retrieve himself had been overlooked. But the panic flight would then stand forever between him and his return and rehabilitation."

"There could be no coming back," said Wentworth.

"I do not go that far," protested Upson. "But that thought would be in the dreamer's mind. To drop metaphor, John, it is my opinion that some of

the big fellows down there on the Street got your father into a corner, put him into a position from which he could see no way out at the moment, and squeezed him. Whether this was done by some suppression; whether he was led into signing obligations he could not meet; whether securities that could not at that moment be replaced were swallowed by a swiftly manipulated and disastrous turn in stocks I do not know. But the thing is done every day. It is a mere incident in life with those fellows. And generally each one takes his turn, and they are all going continually up and down like an eternal and infernal seesaw. Your father was a bigger man than usually falls; and the profit was greater to those who ruined him. Also, his fall made more commotion. I believe that the man, or men, responsible knew him, temperamentally, better than you did. They counted upon what would follow on their act. It is possible that they know where he is now, and have a fear that you may come to suspect them. Why should they offer to care for you, otherwise?"

Wentworth put the point as to himself aside, for the moment, although Upson's words had strongly borne out his own fleeting notion of a conscience fund.

"You honestly do not believe that my father is dead?" he asked.

"I will believe that he is dead when the Bay gives up his body—not before."

"I cannot think that he would run away from a mere money loss," said Wentworth, insistently.

"Nor does it follow that he has. Understand me, John! I do not imply, knowing you, I do not believe, that your father has run away because of dishonour. But that he may have been led to think that dishonour impended is certainly within the possibilities. We do not know what moments of weakness he may have had; what promises may have been made to him; what his condition may have been as to sanity; what pressure may have been brought to bear; what power of coercion may have been in the hands of his enemies at the psychological moment. But that he was driven to flight, I am most firmly persuaded."

"And you think that Harran——"

"I have named Harran for choice. There may have been, and probably were, others in it as well. The pickings would be large enough to share. However his affairs were tangled, your father had millions. And the fellows who took his fleece would have more than enough to make all his projects good."

"Mr. Chester said that there was nothing left that belonged to my father."

"Ah, the lawyer! Well, at that point come in the ethics of the profession, my son. As your father's representative, to say the least possible of it, Mr. Chester has taken a peculiar position. I would not go any further than that at this time."

"If all this be true," said Wentworth, and his mental state as he said it was more hopeful than it

had been at any time since his arrival in San Francisco, "the first thing needful is to find my father!"

"That is the thing needful—but it cannot be done first."

"What, then?"

"We must get a line on the operation in the Street that led to the disaster. If your father is alive as I believe, he is somewhere safe, and as well as a man may be who carries his load."

"It should be my first duty to set him right," protested Wentworth. "To get him out of his false position!"

"Certainly. But it is a point of method. It is very doubtful whether you can do anything at all by commencing an immediate search for him. If there had been a deal, the men who were behind it will make it their business to watch you, and to thwart any efforts you may make calculated to jeopardize their security. Your talk with Chester may already have put them on guard. You scorned his proposals and he seems deep in their confidence. And, remember, they have money at command and a long reach."

Upson paused for a moment, to light a cigarette.

"I incline to think, John," he went on, "that it would have been wiser for you to stay with the University."

"And feed from the hands of the men who ruined my father?" asked Wentworth, so completely had he accepted the theories of Upson.

"It would have thrown them off their guard more completely," the other replied. "And they would not have credited you even with a suspicion."

"Well, it is done, now," said Wentworth. "I have rejected their help, and with something of scorn. And I am glad that I did," he added, reflectively.

"Yes; I suppose that I am, too," said Upson. "Nevertheless, the absence of suspicion from the minds of those estimable gentlemen would have been a desirable thing at this moment. That condition being out of the question, the next best thing is for you to get work somewhere, anywhere, at anything, it does not matter what. You should appear to be so completely occupied in making your living as to leave no time at all for other matters. That is to blind your watchful enemy as to your real purpose."

"And the appearance of making my living may well run into the reality," said Wentworth, grimly. "But you surely do not mean that I must abandon, even for the time being, all effort to get at the bottom of this thing?"

"Not at all. You must do your investigating with adroitness, which is a different thing. You have shrewd men and powerful agencies opposed to you. I will take your interest in charge, as your lawyer. It will be the obvious thing for you to have a lawyer. In that position, it is possible that I may get a line that you would never find. Working together—for I mean that you shall work, although as yet we have not thought out a campaign—we are certain

to get the clue, sooner or later. If either of us discovers anything, when either of us discovers anything we will act. In the meantime, you work, work, work! That is the best anodyne for a weary mind the Lord ever devised."

CHAPTER VII

A RED ROSE—AND THE OLD LIFE ENDS

THE waiter brought the rum omelet, and Upson began to spoon the blazing liquor over the dish, cooking it after the manner approved by the worldly.

"The thing for you now, John," he said, "is to put yourself entirely in my hands as your legal adviser. Let the law feel its way, first."

"I will be honest with you, Fred," replied Wentworth. He had in his mind a keen remembrance of Mr. Chester the elder. "I don't like law, nor yet, as a class, lawyers."

Upson smiled, divining the thought behind the words. "You must have them, nevertheless—to meet law, and other lawyers," he said.

"There is a good deal of the idea of enlisting mercenary troops in it."

"The mercenaries volunteer in your interest this time, old man. Hullo! There is Allison!"

Wentworth looked across the room, and saw the man he had left on the back stoop of the Foothills Hotel making his way toward them from the Grill entrance.

"I thought I had abandoned you in the south," he said, rising to greet his friend.

"So you did, dear boy," replied Allison, shaking hands with one and then the other. "How are you, Upson? But Brooks and I caught the Coaster this morning at Ventura, after staying long enough to give ease of mind to a number of your dear friends, disturbed by stories in the Los Angeles papers, and followed after. I could not desert Brooks as you did me. I find he is a valuable asset to me, if only in the way of an awful example of what follows on human frailty. But do you know that it is after midnight, you two owls? And I am as hungry as a wolf."

The waiter, at a nod from Upson, had drawn a third chair to the little table, and Allison sat down and called for a steak and a bottle of Burgundy. Waiting for his service, he was taken into the talk at once.

"I have just been telling this youth," explained Upson, after a short recital of Wentworth's experience with the lawyer, "that he must let me represent his interests in these matters."

"Surely!" agreed Allison.

"And I have been telling Upson that I like neither law nor the genus lawyer," said Wentworth; "that the notion of employing mercenaries in warfare is very repugnant to me."

"It seems to me that the mercenaries volunteer," suggested Allison. "And it takes a lawyer to fight lawyers."

This somewhat whimsical repetition by the new-

comer of almost the very words that Upson had used put the three into that humorous vein that is to be found in almost everything human—and so on a better footing as to the tragic business they were discussing.

"I suppose that I will have to let you fellows have your way of it," said Wentworth, under this better influence.

"Of course you will," agreed Upson, cheerfully. "And now, where are you stopping?"

"Here," replied Wentworth.

"At the St. Francis!" exclaimed Upson.

"Pretty high, isn't it, all things considered? I'll move to-morrow."

"Come up to the University Club with me!" cried Allison.

"And Brooks? Thanks, old man. But that would be pretty high, too. I must make my own living, now, you know. My lawyer here tells me that, and, indeed, I know it without any telling."

"And that will be enough of the battle for you to undertake at first," said Upson.

"All the same," insisted Wentworth, "I do not intend to give up the field to you altogether."

"The legal end of it, at all events," said Upson. "And now, about making your living?"

"I might get a clerkship somewhere?" suggested Wentworth.

"A form of slavery!" murmured Allison.

"Not bad, as tending to take all the time a man has," said Upson.

"Nevertheless, I didn't believe that it is good for any man to become a mere drudge," said Allison, speaking with an earnestness unusual to him. "I think it would be better if you could find something that would give you a chance to do some of the fighting. And, anyway, how do you propose to live until you get your clerkship?"

"I still have most of the two hundred I left the Foothills with. And I can sell the Green Flyer," said Wentworth. "It cost me $5,000. I should get half that."

"Give you three thousand for it!" said Allison.

"What do you want with it? You never drove a car in your life."

"I am possessed of a wild desire to begin. And, dear boy, think how eligible it will be for Brooks to break his neck with on joy rides! Do you take it?"

"Of course I take it. Send me a check in the morning."

"Good enough!" said Allison.

"Three thousand ought to keep me, even at the St. Francis, for a day or two," said Wentworth.

"As your legal adviser, I still think it will be better for you to find an occupation," put in Upson. "The three thousand is a very good nest-egg, and might be needed to buy powder. A war chest is a very good thing to have, when war impends."

"Right you are!" exclaimed Wentworth. "What a blessing it is that my poor, old dad would never permit me to go into debt. I don't owe a soul!"

He was silent, downcast for just a moment. And then his cheerfulness came back. "I'll bank the three thousand, and find a room in the Western Addition to-morrow," he said. "Then I'll look for a job."

"Ever do newspaper work?" asked Upson.

"Not a line. Why?"

"Well, there's Charlie Stringham, managing editor of the *Call*, over there. I know him pretty well. I used to do a turn or two at it myself, in my college days. And they are always giving fellows tryouts on the newspapers. Want to take a chance?"

He did not say, although he knew it to be the fact, that if Wentworth became interested, the trade would take all that he had to give, body and brain. The fact that he wanted a clear field to work in was one that he could not bring out too clearly.

"I'll take any chance:" replied Wentworth. And then he went on, eagerly, "It would be the best thing I could do. The reporters go everywhere."

"So they do," agreed Upson. He rose at that. "Stay here a minute, you fellows," he said.

He went straight across the Grill to where there sat at a table alone a square-jawed, clean-shaven man, not old, but with the lines in his face that great responsibility graves more deeply than the years. This man looked up and nodded, and Upson sat down opposite him. The lawyer seemed to lay the matter in hand before the square-jawed man in a very earnest manner indeed. Wentworth, watching,

caught one swift glance from a pair of clear, blue eyes that just swept over him in a look that seemed to take in instantly everything in the Grill—the lights, the flowers, the men and women babbling in time to the music, everything. And Wentworth knew, meeting the blue eyes, that he had been measured.

Presently Upson rose, Stringham set down his wine glass, empty, and followed him. They came over to the table where Allison was now attacking his steak and Burgundy, and Upson introduced the editor. Stringham came to the point like a man who meets, and passes, everything.

"Upson tells me that you want to try your hand at newspaper work, Mr. Wentworth," he said.

"I want to work," replied Wentworth.

"There is work for men who want it," replied the editor. "But it is real work. A newspaper demands everything. Come to my office to-morrow at one o'clock, and we'll talk it over. I dare say we can arrange something, if you really want it."

"Thank you!" said Wentworth.

"Not at all. Good-night," said the editor. "Good-night, Mr. Allison. I'm glad to have met you. I will see you about that other matter any time you like, Upson. Good-night."

The three young men gave him good-night, and he went his way out of the Grill. And the next day John Wentworth was regularly enrolled on the City Staff of the *Call*, with orders to report for duty the following afternoon, and a salary of twenty

dollars a week as a beginner. He had been accustomed to spend several times that amount in a day, if it suited his humour, but this small stipend was a healthy one for a man to begin the world on. He found a room, too, away out on Bush Street, beyond Fillmore; and for this he paid ten dollars a month in advance, with the privilege of the bath.

To this place he sent his steamer trunk from the St. Francis; and later, a larger trunk from the marble palace on Pacific Heights filled with such of his personal belongings as it suited him to keep. A few trinkets, his father's repeater which he found in his own old room by some strange chance, and his private papers. He got this trunk by favour of Upson, who procured an order from the receiver in bankruptcy. Bankruptcy proceedings had already been commenced when Wentworth reached San Francisco. The receiver it was who had taken possession of the marble palace as the only tangible thing left by the elder Wentworth. Otherwise, there was in sight only the promoter's interest in various projected enterprises, and these the receiver might hope to realize on only by an amicable arrangement with the people who were to revive the Bank.

After he had removed his luggage to his new quarters, Wentworth banked the three thousand Allison paid him for the Green Flyer, and was ready to report for duty to the City Editor. Upson, of course, had already begun to look out for his interests. But it was a hopeless task enough. There really did not

seem to be any material interests to look out for. No line appeared anywhere that could be followed to any tangible result.

The new Bank of the Pacific had opened its doors with five millions in gold coin in sight. It was announced that all agreements made by the late President of the Bank would be carried out to the letter. His big industrial projects would be financed and completed. The old depositors would be taken care of, in time, out of the realized assets of the Bank, and trust funds would be cared for.

And as the men who were behind the Bank were known to be the heaviest capitalists in the city, after a flurry or two in the stock market the Street settled quickly. Money began to be paid into the Bank, before the close of business, faster than it had ever come in before. The Directors, who had saved the situation in the city with the help of the Clearing House—which announced its alliance with the new management at the opening of business—were hailed as the financial regenerators of the Pacific Coast. The mining stock market took a strong bullish tone. Money rates eased up. The city, in a word, accepted the new condition. And the fall of Elliot Wentworth became, almost in a day, a vanishing milestone in the mad American race for money. He was down—and passed. The field swept on.

John Wentworth dined with Allison at the University Club that night. He took it as the last taste of a life that might never be his again—and was not

conscious of any keen regret on that score. Allison, of course, had in his mind a purpose to hold his friend, despite his changed position. And in some measure, whatever might chance, he would probably be able to do that. A newspaper man has associates everywhere.

On his side, Wentworth realized how it would perhaps come that in the real interests of their lives they would drift apart. But he ate his dinner, and drank his wine, and let nothing of his realization appear. After dinner they went to the Majestic and saw John Drew in a couple of acts of "The Master." Afterward they tooka taxi for Tait's to get a bite of supper.

And as they sat over it there was the bustle of the entrance of a theatre party, and Wentworth, forgetting for a moment, rose to answer the smile and bow that Margaret Graeme gave him as she passed with a gay following of young men and women. Only, she had paused in passing for the least fraction of a second, her hand going to the cluster of red roses at her corsage. And a rose, a single rose, seemed to detach itself to fall at Wentworth's feet.

He stooped quickly, picked it from the floor, and thrust it into the flap of his coat. She had swept on into the inner room, with no more than the smile and the bow. Allison, rising to bow in return, had not seemed to notice the rose, although it may well be that friendship is sometimes blind, as well as love. Wentworth had his prize, at all events—and it was

not much. A silence fell between the two friends, for a little, after the other party had entered.

Wentworth was the first to break it. "It is time for working people to be in bed," he said. "It is long past midnight."

If Allison had expected that the silence would have been broken in another way he said nothing. "Newspaper people run all night," was his only protest at the parting.

"Not beginners. And the others do not keep honest people up just for the fun of the thing, dear boy. Good-night."

He left Allison still lounging at the table, under the lights and the palms, with the soft music rising and falling across the chatter of the theatre crowds. Allison would probably join the other party when he was gone. Wentworth felt no bitterness on that account. Allison's place was with the other party. And he would be whimsical, and winning, and the women would be—well, his friend deserved to win any woman. Allison was too good a fellow to care whether a man who had dropped out of that old life took down with him into the other and harder world a memory of a sweet perfume—and a faded rose.

Wentworth held the rose in his hand as he made his way into the street, and the music followed him as the doors closed behind him. It was Hawaiian, the music, and Wentworth had a throbbing in his brain in unison with the half-barbaric beat of it. Once, in his early college days, he had taken a vaca-

tion run to the Islands. It all came back to him in the music. The sensuous strains brought to his ears the soft grating of the palm trees stirred by the trade winds, the murmur of breaking seas on far-off reefs, the sighing of warm gales among spice islands. And he saw the islands that night in his dreams, and a woman beckoned to him there, holding a warm red rose in her hand.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WRECK OF THE "HALCYON"

PROMPTLY at one o'clock in the afternoon of the next day Wentworth reported for duty to the City Editor. It was, perhaps, not astonishing that he caught on to the newspaper game quickly—of course, not the whole game. A man may labour at that for a score of years, even a very clever man, and find at the end that there are still unsuspected angles. In that lies something of the game's fascination. There is with every moment some new thing. The modern American mind is constituted strikingly like the mind of the ancient Athenian. If it is only a new dollar, the American runs after the novelty.

Wentworth was sent, in the first casting of the pawns that the City Editor uses in his daily play, to lend a hand to the day police reporter. The day policeman for the *Call*, and every other day man on police, greeted him fraternally; made him one of the cult at once. They were a helpful lot, with a good understanding as to the routine of their labour. That is to say, each served his own paper, primarily, seeking to get for it any exclusive piece of news that he could. But even in the keenness of their rivalry no

one of them would take an unfair advantage of the rest. He would have been sent to Coventry if he had, but the fear of that was not the deterrent. It was much more the ethics of the thing. They played the game honestly.

These men, while they were all willing to lend a hand to the beginner, and to do it in genuine friendliness, without the least taint of patronage, began by assuming that Wentworth knew the ropes that held the players of the game safely within bounds. And, under the influence of this assumption, tending inevitably to create self-confidence, Wentworth played boldly—and found the ropes where he expected to find them. A man of fair intelligence, with the knack of writing a plain newspaper story with some slight touches of whimsical humour here and there, he found after that first day that he got on. More, having a deeper purpose below his work, Wentworth saw very quickly how familiarity with policemen and police methods might come to be of material help to him in the working out of his purpose.

Now, it is the practice in every good newspaper office to pile all the work on a clever and willing man that he will do without protest. Wentworth was both clever and willing; and was made to earn his twenty dollars a week. Likewise he found that in earning it he was so absorbed in each day's happenings, so occupied with the labour of the passing hour, that he had but little time left to think on his own concerns—and no time at all for brooding. He never

really lost sight altogether of the purpose that had been behind his every act since the disappearance of his father, but the daily call of the daily work kept his mind from dwelling upon it. And that was healthful. Secret design is never good for the heart of youth.

Wentworth went to his little room in Bush Street every night, honestly tired, and slept the sleep that attends on physical fatigue. And he arose refreshed, along about noon, to go down for his morning coffee to a little place he found handy in Fillmore Street.

It was coffee and rolls, mostly, or coffee and "sinkers," which is the San Francisco argot for the cheap and filling doughnut of city consumption. And the coffee was the coffee-house decoction of the ground berry and milk boiled together. Wentworth, after the first few times of drinking, found that he really began to have a taste for this beverage of the poor. Also, with this kind of breakfast, a seventy-five-cent table d'hôte dinner at Paul's at seven, and coffee and rolls—with a couple of eggs, or fried sausage, or corned beef hash, or pork and beans—at the Fillmore Street place on his way home, he could live very well within his twenty a week.

And he could save a dollar or two a week to buy beer for the boys at the Press Club, too. But he cut that out very soon, finding that it was more profitable to his line of work to buy beer for the policemen and small politicians. The whole thing gave him life in a new and not unattractive aspect.

For two months Wentworth lived his life thus,

seeing little of Upson; and, after the first week, nothing at all of Allison. He heard, indeed, that Allison had gone to Europe, read it in bed, one morning, on the Society Page of the *Call's* Sunday Sup. And on the same page was the story of the presentation of a San Francisco beauty, Miss Margaret Graeme, at an English Court drawing room! The fact that he got this information as the balance of the town did, showed how far Wentworth had drifted away from the old life.

And Upson, getting no line to work on, let him be vigilant as he would, had no occasion to send for his friend. Wentworth, in the two months, was sent by his tyrant the City Editor here, there, and everywhere on all kinds of errands. He tasted the glory of handling alone a great story of a railway disaster, and the humiliation of repulse from the kitchen door of a defaulting labour leader to whose slattern wife he was sent for a photograph.

And then, upon a day, having been kept with the reserve on office watch for a couple of hours, he was sent hurriedly down to answer a call for help from the Waterfront Man—an autocrat who worked after his own method, at his own time, in his own jurisdiction—and whom it chanced, therefore, that Wentworth had never met.

Threading his way from the foot of Market Street in and out among electric cars, heavily laden trucks, and nondescript human drift cast ashore along the Embarcadero and eddying into the low liquor places

there, Wentworth found the *Call's* marine expert, a master in his line, seated before a desk telephone, the receiver at his ear, in a little wooden shed on a place on Peterson's boat wharf. As it happened, the expert was alone in the room, although there were a few tarry-looking loungers just outside the door.

Wentworth stood quiet for a moment waiting for the other to finish with the telephone. But the expert, as it appeared, could talk to one man over the phone and to another at his side at the same time, a common talent among newspaper men.

"Oh, you are Wentworth?" he said, turning, with the receiver still held to his ear. "Hullo! That you, Jim? Is the *Korea* passing in? This is Hanna."

Then, again speaking to Wentworth: "I suppose you saw the cable a few weeks ago about the wreck of the tramp freighter *Halcyon* on Guam? Only the captain and two men saved? Well, you'll find one of the survivors, a sailor, on board another ship just docked at Spreckles' wharf. Go over there and get the full story, will you, please? And report back to me. It ought to be a good yarn."

He turned back to the phone, over the mouthpiece of which he had held one hand while he was talking to Wentworth. "Yes; I am listening. All right, Jim. I'll go out with you. I am coming right over."

"All right, sir!" said Wentworth, as soon as he thought politeness permitted him to break in.

"Not gone yet?" asked the other, turning from

the phone. "Better get a wiggle on! The sailor might leave the ship."

He went out the door, at that, and was gone. Wentworth, more slowly, made his way along the Embarcadero toward Broadway wharf, and heard himself hailed by name as he was picking his way over the narrow, uneven footpath that lies between the roadway and a high board fence shutting in the wharves. He turned, just as his friend the sailor, McGreal, came across to meet him from the open door of one of the many groggeries standing all along there. Having interest in his work, it occurred to Wentworth that this man had been the third mate of the *Halcyon*, and so might give him points about the ship that would do to feature in his story. And, anyhow, he would be interested.

"Hullo, McGreal!" he said. "Found a ship yet?"

"Yes, sir; I got a berth on the transport *Sherman*. Fourth officer, sir. She sails to-morrow."

Wentworth noted then, for the first time, that the sailor had on a blue uniform, with neat cap, and that there was about him a general air of nautical nattiness that sat pleasantly on his loose strength. It seemed, indeed, that the man had grown to a sense of some responsibility, and that he had possibilities for growth in reserve. It was an impression of the moment, merely, Wentworth's own immediate duty taking possession of him.

"Can you come along with me for an hour or two?" asked the newspaper man.

"Surely, sir. My watch on deck does not begin until eight bells to-night. How you headed, sir?"

"For Spreckels' wharf. There's a ship lying there—with a survivor of the *Halcyon* on board."

"The *Halcyon*, sir?" McGreal had stopped in his tracks. "I had not heard she was lost."

"The *Halcyon*," repeated Wentworth. "The loss was cabled weeks ago."

"I missed it!" gasped McGreal, still standing with his eyes grown large. "The *Halcyon!* Why, that was my ship, sir!"

"So it was," agreed Wentworth. "She was wrecked on the island of Guam, and I am going to get the story."

"The story!" exclaimed McGreal. "Oh, I see. You are on a newspaper. Was—was anybody lost, sir?"

"Captain and two men saved," replied Wentworth. "Come along."

He started forward as he spoke, and McGreal came stumbling at his heels. The sailor seemed to be a bit dazed, striking his feet against the rough stones of the street, now and then lurching over against the high board fence, and paying no heed. Once, turning sharply around, Wentworth drew him literally out from under the feet of a heavy truck team that otherwise would most assuredly have walked him down.

"Wake up, man!" cried Wentworth. "Didn't you ever heard of a shipwreck before?"

"The *Halcyon*, sir!" said McGreal, feebly. "All of them gone! And you—to be sent to get the story of the *Halcyon!*"

"What's the matter with you?" asked Wentworth, sharply.

"I don't know, sir," replied McGreal, in helpless fashion.

"I think you must be drunk!" said Wentworth at that, looking at the sailor more sharply than he had done yet.

McGreal braced up with an apparent effort. "Not me," he said. "I've had nothing more than a glass or two of steam beer. It was the shock, sir."

However, he came along very much better after that. Wentworth found the survivor of the *Halcyon* right enough, and, sailorwise, entirely willing to talk to a newspaper man. The man was seated on the edge of a bunk in the forecastle smoking a short briar pipe. With a sailor's limitless patience he was just waiting for the next turn of the wheel. He would go, it was likely, with the first crimp that came on board looking for men. And as he sat, the purser pointed him out to Wentworth.

"Well, d'ye see, sir, it was this way," said the sailor, when Wentworth questioned him, after he had greeted McGreal as a former officer by touching his forelock. "It had been blowing like hell out of the southwest for three days; and the old tub labouring in the biggest seas I ever saw, as if every-one of them would roll the engines out of her. I

don't know what possessed the old man—that was Captain Graeme, sir—to run down to Guam, unless it was the passenger."

"The passenger?" exclaimed Wentworth.

"He came aboard after you left the ship, Mr. McGreal," said the sailor. "He was the only man that got safe ashore, the passenger, excepting the old man and me, sir. My name, as Mr. McGreal here knows, is Oleson—Arvad Oleson, sir."

"Who was the passenger?" asked Wentworth.

"He called himself Norman Ainsworth, sir."

"Where'd you get him?"

"Well, I think it was in this port, sir, but I don't rightly know. It was my watch below when we were passing into San Francisco, and we went out of the port in a fog. And—and, when I came aboard, sir—well, I had had a bit to drink—and the old man gave me a jolt with a marlin spike and another watch below. When I came on deck again, outside the Farallones, there was the passenger, talking to the old man on the after deck. A good sailor he was, sir, and a gentleman. Sent a case of beer forward the first Sunday out of port, and every Sunday after that until the very last."

"What do you know about this passenger, McGreal?" asked Wentworth, turning suddenly to his sailor footpad friend.

"M-me, sir? Nothing!"

"I thought you seemed to, a bit ago. Did the *Halcyon* carry passengers?"

"She carried one that voyage, anyway," said Oleson. McGreal was mute.

"There is a touch of mystery here," said Wentworth. "That makes it a better story. But go on and tell us how the wreck occurred, Oleson."

"As I was a-saying, sir," resumed the sailor, "I don't know what it was possessed the old man to run down to Guam. She had cleared for Nagasaki, out of this port. But there was the island, right enough, standing up rocky and black out of those big seas. And I don't think the old man was glad of a landfall, one time. Still, it might have been all right, even then, if she could have got under the lee of the long point of San Luis d'Apra, to run inside. The sea was a fright, sir, and the wind howled like the tail of a tropic hurricane; but she was fighting her way in for the headland, and a little more than holding her own, when, snap! the propeller dropped clear away from her—broken short off by a green sea, and she just fell over on her side, the shaft racing and smashing things to hash in the belly of her.

"They got the engines stopped in a minute; but the seas were running her right in on the reef outside the harbour, sir. You could see the white spray thrown over a hundred feet every time that one of them curled over and broke. And there must have been a strong set of the current in toward the island, too, because we went drifting right down on it at better speed than the *Halcyon* had ever made since she was engined.

"Of course it wasn't any use to make sail. Those tramps don't carry a rag to bless themselves that is worth a damn. And it wasn't any use to try to leave her, because a boat couldn't have lived in that sea. We just had to drift in to destruction and take our chance. It was near about three o'clock in the afternoon when we made the landfall, sir. It was just gone dark when she struck, once and again! We could see the lights of a big transport inside as we came on, and a searchlight was held on us. It gave them the sight of our poor fellows drowning, sir. They couldn't help us. Nothing afloat could have come out into that wind and sea.

"And so she struck, once and again, and there was an awful grinding and smashing noise; and the wild shriek of the steam to the top of that. And then I was in the water, sir, with a smother of white foam all about me; and a queer kind of light all through it, like the green flames of hell.

"I don't know how I got over the reef; nor how any man could have passed it with those ferocious seas beating straight down, and lived. I saw the black rocks all about me in the shining water, and got a badly scratched knee and arm, sir. Wet coral rocks are nasty. And then a straight line of water stood up over me, like the cutting edge of a long knife, sir, and a wave threw me over into still water, and just seemed to lift me above the rocks. Some Chimorros in a canoe picked me up and took me aboard the transport. I found the old man and the

passenger there. They had been picked up, as I had been, by the niggers. And that is all, sir."

"What became of Captain Graeme—and the passenger?"

"Well, sir, they were offered passage on the *Hancock*—that's the transport that was in San Luis d'Apra, storm bound—and we all came to Honolulu in her. They would not carry us beyond the first regular port, sir. The old man paid me off at Honolulu, and I came on in this ship. They stayed there."

"In Honolulu?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the *Hancock?*" asked Wentworth, next.

"On the way up from the island, sir. She left a day ahead of us, but the transports are slow, sir."

"Gee! It's a great story!" exclaimed Wentworth. "The *Halcyon* was a total loss?"

"No more than the bones of her left by this," replied Oleson.

"What was her lading?"

"She cleared this port in ballast, sir. She was bound for Nagasaki to coal, and then to Hankow for tea."

"She was a long way out of her course, at Guam."

"Five or six hundred miles," agreed Oleson. "But we laid it to the passenger, sir."

"Why?"

"Well, sir, there wasn't any special reason—and the passenger didn't stay at Guam after he got there.

But something took the old man south, and we got to laying it to the passenger among us."

"By God!" exclaimed Wentworth. "I am inclined to think that the passenger is the whole story! What kind of looking man was he, this passenger, Ainsworth?"

"Well, sir," replied the sailor, "he was much about your build, but older, and heavier. He was near fifty, I should say, sir; maybe more, maybe less. He grew a heavy beard and moustache on the ship; and his hair was gray. But his eyes had a twinkle in them, like yours, sir; and he was very pleasant-spoken and civil. Dressed, sir—well, like a landsman. And was very curious about all the workings of a ship."

It was a description that might have fitted any one of a million of middle-aged men. The sailor had eyes, but, clearly, no manner of notion of the use of them where men were concerned. Wentworth was baffled. There was about this mysterious passenger on the *Halcyon* something that it was desirable to throw light upon, and he hardly knew which way to look, unless McGreal could give him a line, once they were away from the sailor. McGreal had seemed to know about the passenger, although he had later disclaimed any knowledge. That might have been to throw Oleson off. Wentworth turned to McGreal now.

"Come along," he said. "I've got all I want here."

He slipped a silver dollar into Oleson's hand as he

spoke, and started out. McGreal did not follow at once, and, turning to ask Oleson one more question, Wentworth saw that the fourth mate of the *Sherman* was whispering very earnestly to the survivor of the wreck of the *Halcyon*.

"I don't believe you told me the date of the wreck, Oleson," Wentworth said.

"It was on the 28th of April, sir. We were just twenty-three days out of San Francisco."

Then Wentworth left the steamer, McGreal following him, and, which he thought a little odd, Oleson came along, too, slinging a bundle of dunnage over his shoulder. At the head of the wharf, Wentworth turned to ask McGreal something apart from the other, thinking, naturally, that Oleson would drift along to the first saloon that chanced to be in his way. But Oleson stopped, too, and McGreal, coming very close to Wentworth, said in a tone that was almost a whisper:

"I'll tell you what, Mr. Wentworth! I'll see that no other reporter gets at Oleson here. We have made that up between us. And," sinking his voice still lower, "if I were you, sir, I wouldn't make too much of a story about the *Halcyon's* passenger."

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN WHO WAS SAVED

"WHAT the devil have you got to do with my story of the *Halcyon's* passenger?" flashed Wentworth.

His purpose to get points from McGreal as to the career of the tramp steamer that had laid her bones on the reef outside the harbour of San Luis d'Apra was lost sight of in a moment, and with the quick instinct of the newspaper man he resented this interference by an outsider with the manner of his work.

McGreal, on his part, took no offence at the tone of the question. He looked into the face of Wentworth, and there was real sorrow in his eyes.

"It is as I say, sir," with a strange manner of insistence. "If I were you, I wouldn't make too much of a story about the *Halcyon's* passenger."

"By God; you've got to tell me what you mean!" cried Wentworth.

"Why, yes, sir; I'll do that," replied McGreal. "Come over to the Blue Wind, sir. We can get a room to talk in, there."

He led the way across the wide road along the waterfront, dodging trucks and electric cars, to

the row of groggeries facing the wharves on that side; and Wentworth and the sailor Oleson followed along after him. The Blue Wind saloon, a typical resort of the front, stood open to the street, and a wavering row of the men of the salt sea, more or less under the influence of the drinks of the land, stood before the long bar down all one side of the place. They talked, or shouted, or just stared stupidly, with eyes that saw only the visions of the drunken, but they all called for more drink, and all drank. The two bloated, red-faced men behind the bar, in dirty white aprons, had all they could do to serve them. And a boy, in a white apron rather more dirty, was kept going backward and forward across the sanded floor with drinks for other men seated at the small tables standing in a row on the side of the room opposite the bar.

McGreal knew the place, and was known in it. He paused, in passing through, just long enough to say to one of the men behind the bar: "Send us in three steams to the Glory Hole, Bill!"

The man so addressed nodded, by way of assent, and McGreal led the way out through a back door, and for a little distance along a dark corridor in the rear of the saloon. He turned from this into a dingy room, feebly lighted by one dirty, fly-specked, sixteen-candle-power electric bulb swung from the ceiling above a small, round table with four rickety chairs about it. The place reeked of the fumes of stale beer and sewer water. The floor, of rough boards,

sounded hollow to the tread of men. It seemed to have been the floor of a wharf at one time and to cover, now, an obscene cavity wherein might abide nameless horrors. And, indeed, it is likely that it was a section of some old wharf. All that part of the front is built on made land.

The walls of the room were splotched with mildew, breaking out in impolite places on the pictures, mostly of ladies in scant attire, or no attire at all, cut from illustrated gutter weeklies, and pasted up by way of mural decoration. The years had dimmed the pictures, too, the years and the damp, and Jack's gross familiarity with these questionable female presentments had not always been happy.

McGreal sat down at the round table. Oleson, who seemed at home here just as he had seemed at home in the forecastle of the ship, dropped his bundle on the rough floor and sat down likewise. Wentworth, sniffing, rolled and lighted a cigarette by way of fumigation and self-defence before following the example of his companions. And by the time he had done that, the bar boy had come in with his tray, had set three foaming glasses of steam beer on the table, pocketed the three nickels laid down by McGreal, and gone out again.

"Now, McGreal!" said Wentworth, reaching out for his glass of beer. "Out with it!"

The fourth mate of the *Sherman* blew the foam off his beer, and sipped it slowly. Oleson had gulped his down at once and set the empty glass back on the

table; seeing which, Wentworth slid toward the sailor his own measure of the beverage. But McGreal seemed in no hurry to begin. He sipped his beer, still slowly, but, at that, probably not so slowly as his thoughts shaped themselves for speech. Wentworth found a button on the table, pressed it, ordered, and paid for three more glasses of steam beer, and the silence in the Glory Hole was not broken.

"Take all day if you need it, McGreal!" Wentworth said, as he rolled himself a second cigarette. "Of course I'm in no hurry!"

"Well, sir," said the fourth mate at last, "I don't know as it's much to tell, or whether it will strike you as it does me, sir. But it was a thought that crossed me when I first heard your name—that day we came up from the south in your devil wagon."

"And what has this thought, whatever it is, got to do with my story of the *Halcyon's* passenger?" asked Wentworth.

"Why, there it is, sir! The thought crossed me again to-day, when I heard you say the passenger was the story. I believe that the passenger is the story. But it is not a story you may write."

"I'll be damned," cried Wentworth, starting as if he would get up from his chair, "if I can tell what the man is driving at!"

"Hold on a second!" cried McGreal. "Let me get my bearings; I have not told you yet."

"That is the first sensible thing you have said

since we arrived. You have not told me yet. Do you intend to tell me?"

"Yes, sir," replied the fourth mate, seriously. "I do. The *Halcyon* came to San Francisco solely to get that passenger. Do you mind when I told you why I left the steamer at Pedro?"

"You said something about helping a robber to get away with the loot of widows and orphans," replied Wentworth—and in a lower key than he had heretofore used. He had gone white as that memory came back to him with another associated memory: his own thoughts at the time.

"That was it, sir," said McGreal. "I don't like to go on from that—but it looks like it was my duty. The old man, Captain Graeme, sir, did not tell me who his passenger was to be. We were to receive him aboard ship after we came to anchor. He wanted the man on watch to do that and stow him away—not wishing to appear in the thing directly himself. A captain would better be able to carry a straight yarn to the owners, in case of things happening. Of course he couldn't throw a man overboard after he was on deck and she was outside, d'you see? And his duty to his owners would not permit him to turn back, excepting for grave cause, when he had cleared the port, and got outside. Besides, the passenger would not want to go back.

"But a man might be carried out of his course by wind and current far enough, sir, once he was at sea, to land a man who wanted to leave the ship at

Guam—or even at Yap, say. The man on the deck watch had only to receive the man on board and hide him in an empty cabin—and then keep up a pretence of ignorance, whatever he might see, to earn a thousand dollars. I am not better than another man, and I agreed to the scheme that far. But I did say a thousand dollars was a pretty fancy price to pay—just for helping. And it was then that the old man blurted out that a stowaway who was put aboard by a man who had probably got away with the savings of most of the widows, and had robbed a lot of the orphans of San Francisco, could afford to buy all the sailors running out of the port, body and breeches."

"And—and, then?" asked Wentworth. He had to take a long drink of the steam beer before he could get that much out. His lips, when he tried to speak, felt as though a swift flame had seared them.

"Well, sir, I've done a lot of things in my time, and I don't have to make any treaty with my conscience in the ordinary run of every day, but taking the money of women and children, or helping away the man who takes it, is one too strong for me. And so I went over the side at Pedro. It was the only way out. I knew the old man, sir. He would never consent to my discharge; and, after what he had told me, it was possible that I might make the voyage to San Francisco in irons; and lie in them until the steamer cleared again from there."

"And—and, the *Halcyon's* passenger?" whispered

Wentworth. He knew what the answer to his question would be, what it must be, but something that seemed apart from himself impelled him to force the sailor to frame the words. All that Upson had said to him in justification of his father came back to him, but seemed feeble in the face of McGreal's plain relation. With that realization, a load of guilt seemed to form itself on Wentworth's own shoulders, bearing him down. He looked around the room always away from McGreal, taking in the dark interior, and the sailor Oleson asleep in his chair. And he came back to his question with a strange insistence, whispering it once more.

"There was only one man—who fitted the case—who slipped out of San Francisco on the day the *Halcyon* sailed," whispered McGreal, leaning across the table with his face close to Wentworth's.

Still Wentworth would spare neither the sailor nor himself. "And that man was?" he asked.

"Hush!" whispered McGreal, warningly. "Captain Greame never told me the name of his passenger, sir. The *Halcyon* passed out through the Heads on the evening of the very day that the Bank of the Pacific closed its doors."

Thus the sailor slipped away from the utterance of the name. And Wentworth sat dazed, like a man whose life is stricken all at once. McGreal, still leaning across the table, went on:

"I felt it, sir, on that day at the garage, when I first heard your name spoken. It came over me all

at once, like. But still I could not be sure; and it was not for me to make charges. I would not help Captain Graeme to carry out his plot, but at least, after the man had got clear away, it was none of my business to put the dogs on his track. I could hold my tongue. The *Halcyon* had not been lost, then. And you had been very good to me, sir."

Wentworth looked at him for a moment before there came a slowly dawning consciousness of the meaning of what he had said.

"And did you—did you," he asked, at last, "think that I knew?"

"What was I to think? He was your father. Until I heard you say that the *Halcyon's* passenger was the story, I thought so."

"Great God!" ejaculated Wentworth. And then, for a long time, he sat silent. It seemed to him that the years rushed in on him through the dark of that dingy room. He was very, very tired; like an old man. But his faith must not go. He must pull himself together. The darker the skies lowered, the more firmly and fiercely would he struggle on to make head against the breaking storm.

The fact that the sailor, his friend, had believed his father a thief, and himself a sharer in the shame, was but one more reason for the struggle. Wentworth knew that McGreal's tale was true; his conjecture as to the identity of the *Halcyon's* passenger sound. The other sailor's tale of the wreck of the *Halcyon* bore it out. And the tale being true, how

hard would it be to find a reason for that planned flight—beyond doubt with something of the loot of the bank in hand?

He rose, at last, and staggered out of the place, almost like one drunk. The fourth mate watched him go without a word. But, after he had gone, McGreal leaned over the other sailor, and made sure that he slept soundly. Then he himself went out, turning the key in the lock outside the door as he went. It was one of the peculiar things about the Glory Hole that a man in the confidence of the house could always thus pass out and hold on the inside any companion guilty of the indiscretion of going to sleep in his chair.

"Give him whatever he asks for," McGreal stopped to whisper to his friend behind the bar as he went toward the street, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the room he had just quitted. "But hold him. I want him in the *Sherman*. We were shipmates before."

"What's in it for me?" asked the landlord of the Blue Wind, nodding his head in acquiescence.

"Twenty, and the usual percentage of advance."

"Good enough!" replied the crimp. "He's your man."

Once he was in the outer air Wentworth's thoughts cleared quickly enough. He would have liked to consult Upson on this new development, but it was growing late, and the newspaper was exigent. Long white streamers of the night fog were already begin-

ning to scurry along the streets, to beat the backs of the crowds hurrying to catch the suburban ferries, to curl and eddy around the high façade and tower of the ferry building. He must report back at once to Hanna, in the shed on Peterson's wharf.

Wentworth, indeed, did not hesitate for one moment about his duty to the newspaper. That duty to the newspaper must be defined with reference to another duty which, for him, might be higher. And in his definition of his duty Wentworth did not attempt to delude himself with sophisticated arguments. If his conjecture as to the identity of the *Halcyon's* passenger, which agreed with McGreal's conjecture, was well founded, then the wreck of the *Halcyon* became a newspaper story of much greater magnitude than any that he had ever handled. But it became, also, a story that he could not handle. Of course there was the possibility that McGreal and himself might be mistaken; that the departure of the tramp steamer on the day that the bank closed its doors was a coincidence; that in the incidents of crime in a great city there might be more than one defaulter interested to get away.

But Wentworth dismissed the alternative possibilities with no more than a thought, and made up his mind to tell his story without suggestion; and be then governed by events. He reported to Hanna and suppressing the tale McGreal had told him, saw the waterfront man pass over very lightly the circumstance of the presence of the passenger on the

wrecked steamer. For Hanna knew the devious ways of the captains of tramps—and of all drunken sailors.

"Oh!" exclaimed Hanna, when he had listened to the tale. "A passenger! Those tramps have no license to carry passengers. But they all do it. Name of Norman Ainsworth, the sailor said? I suppose the captain of the *Halcyon* has broken the law in every port in the world in his time. I know him. Well, he won't come back here to answer for this infraction for awhile—and, when he does come back, it will have been forgotten. But it's a good story, Wentworth. Write me a thousand words of it."

Wentworth went up to the office at that, and wrote the thousand words, as he had been bidden. And he received the congratulations of the Night City Editor on the vividness of his relation. Also, he heard an order go up to the art room for a layout of it; with the picture of the *Halcyon* and of Captain Graeme. Nobody seemed to grasp the significance of the touch of mystery he had thrown about the identity of the passenger saved from the wreck of the tramp—the passenger on the ship which had sailed on the very day that the President of the Bank of the Pacific vanished from among men.

Wentworth went to dinner after he had turned in his story, but to the St. Francis Grill instead of, as usual, to Paul's. As he had hoped, he found Upson there. They dined together—and sat so long in

talk after dinner that Wentworth would have earned a strong rebuke, if not something worse, at the hands of the City Editor for his failure to show up for his night assignment, if it had not been that the course of the talk soon put him beyond caring for the office at all. How far he had gone beyond caring was shown in his parting words to Upson.

"It will suit me down to the ground, old man, if you can manage transportation on the *Sherman*. If that is impossible, the *Hortense* sails in three days. She will land me in Honolulu in six from that. The transport will only beat that by a couple of days."

"I can manage it without any trouble at all," replied Upson. "Come to my office the first thing in the morning, and we will go down and see the Quartermaster. You can attend to your letter of credit afterward."

CHAPTER X

THE ENGLISHMAN

OUT of the massed pictures of the trade wind clouds lying all along the southern horizon leaped, upon a rainy morning, a point of blue that did not change its shape as the outlines of the cloud pictures changed. So the U. S. Transport *Sherman*, faring steadily for seven days and nights into the southwest across a sea that seemed the most lonely in the world, made her landfall on Makapuu Point on the morning of the eighth day. She had passed and spoken the *Hancock* one day out of San Francisco.

John Wentworth, standing on the bridge alongside the Quartermaster-Captain, saw the outline of the blue point rise and strengthen, while the cloud pictures were ceaselessly dissolving and building up again beyond it, until at last the whole black and rugged coast of Windward Oahu stood out from the sea; and, on either hand, Molokai and the Hana Coast of Maui loomed dimly.

Following that Windward Coast, the white line of the breaking seas arose and changed and fell at the base of the tall cathedral cliffs. Rabbitt Island broke from the larger land mass at last, and then

there were the pallid green cane fields of Waimanalo, with a rugged ridge of bars, brown craters towering behind them. And the *Sherman* floated into the sheltered water around Coco Head; and Diamond Head, old and massive and hoary, leaped into the picture, with many white villas peeping out from the massed foliage of the algaroba thickets at its base.

Just at half speed, as a white ship glides across a stage picture, the *Sherman* moved along in front of beautiful Waikiki; and the graceful cocoanut trees held themselves like stars against the bit of clear sky that curved down to fill the space of Waialae Gap, between the hills.

Honolulu stood revealed, white houses with red roofs, in a wilderness of tropical foliage. Beyond the city the green hills curved from Tantalus to Round Top, with the Nuuanu and Manoa valleys running far back; and the endless procession of the rainbows moved in stately gorgeousness across the forested highlands under the cloud masses that cling, always, holding the rain, to the summits of the highest peaks.

The *Sherman* was one of those outworn iron tubs, rechristened, which were unloaded in numbers on the Government by their owners in the hurry to procure transports which marked the panicky first days of the Spanish War. She had been, when new, one of the first of the "Atlantic Greyhounds," and in her day capable of fair speed. She had become

rather of the Newfoundland Pup order by the time she passed into Government ownership, and a pup of somewhat clumsy habit at that. But the north Pacific is calm enough, in the summer months, and she tumbled away before the long swells out of the north if not with speed, certainly with safety.

Wentworth found that the transport travelled all too slowly for his impatience in the first three days out of San Francisco. Upson had had no trouble in arranging for his transportation on the Government vessel as far as Honolulu, and farther if it should suit his purpose to go on from there. None but soldiers and officers of the Government, with their families, were supposed to travel on the transports, but that rule, very rigidly enforced now, was a long time in coming strictly into effect. And Upson and the Depot-Quartermaster in San Francisco were very chummy.

Wentworth had sent his written resignation to the City Editor of the *Call*, and on the morning of the day of the publication of his story of the wreck of the *Halcyon*, found himself in a comfortable cabin amidships as the transport dropped down through the heads and met the black seas on the bar. The *Sherman* was making this voyage with supplies for the army in the islands, carrying only a few casuals by way of passengers.

For the first three days out of San Francisco she ran with a strong slant of northwest wind, kicking up a beam sea that made her roll until every inch

of exposed deck space on her was sopping. That, naturally, did not contribute anything to the comfort of the voyage. Nor did it make Wentworth's case any easier. A man is doubly uncomfortable on whom wet and anxiety prey at the same time.

But they ran into the Trades on the morning of the fourth day out, and the wizardry of those winds changed the whole world. The motion of the ship eased. The seas rose and fell but lazily, and with favouring direction. The perfumed air seemed to come over the blue waters from the very gates of Paradise, and behind the squalls of rain that ran pattering across the face of the deep with the passing of each changing cloud opened a vista of such ravishing colour as might have been a glimpse vouchsafed to man into the streets of the Wondrous City. It was only the rainbow, but, set above that sea in the castles and battlemented towers of the clouds, it was like a fleeting vision of the glory of the angel host.

Wentworth felt that life had never been freely his to enjoy until he breathed the velvet air of the Trades that first morning. The troubles that had vexed him while the steamer tumbled along through the darker seas of the north dropped from him. They would come back again, of course. If a man may lay down trouble, even at the portal of the grave —well, that will be enough for the grave to offer.

But, for the moment, his impatience vanished; his anxiety to find the passenger saved from the wreck

of the *Halcyon* was put away; his fear of the ghost that might arise and walk when he found that passenger died. He was content to live and breathe, watching the goonies as they circled in lazy flight about the steamer, letting the ship fare on—the more slowly over his dreamland of the deep, the better.

At Honolulu awakening came. When the *Sherman*, after passing Quarantine, docked at the Navy Wharf, he was one of the first men on shore. Upon another occasion, as on his first visit to the islands, the outland life of this remote city in Uncle Sam's domain would have interested him greatly. The strange cries of the native Hawaiians, one to another, like the barking of dogs across the narrow harbour; the brown divers calling to the people on the transport to throw small coins into the water; the sellers of leis; the chaffering in the King Street markets of dark men and women of many races, chiefly as it seemed concerned with the buying and selling of bizarre-looking fishes; the mingling in the building of the town of the architecture of the east and of the west; the busy life of the Americans touching the lazy indolence of the natives and the Portuguese half castes, with the darker colouring of the Japanese and Chinese showing always as a part of the life picture—all these things were well worth the study of any man from staider lands.

But, filled with the purpose that had brought him to that beach, Wentworth walked rapidly to the head of the wharf and caught a passing Alakea

Street car to King Street. His own newspaper experience, short as it had been, had taught him that in any American city which breasts the outer seas a man must seek first among newspaper men for light on the things which come up out of the deep. The conductor of the car stopped it at King Street for him, and obligingly told him that it was so short a walk to the office of the *Commercial Advertiser* that it would hardly be worth his while to wait for the connecting car, to which he had given him a transfer.

Following the man's directions, Wentworth walked rapidly along east on King Street—*Ewa*, they call that direction in the islands—and found the place he sought up one flight of steps in a low brick building. It was then just early luncheon time. The *Commercial Advertiser* is the morning paper of Honolulu, and at that hour none of the staff had reported for duty. But an obliging man in the business office told Wentworth that he would probably find Mr. Pray, the marine reporter, at breakfast in the Union Grill, next door, and went down on the street with the stranger to point him out.

Mr. Pray was at breakfast. He was eating papaia, with cracked ice in it, at a little table facing the street right in the front of the Grill. Furthermore, as the luncheon crowd had not yet begun to come in from the business offices round about, he was alone in the place save for the presence of a white-clad waiter or two hovering in the background; and of a tall man, with a face like that of Mephistopheles and in

something of the dress of the Greek stage pirate, even to the crimson sash, who lounged behind a little counter in front of a long, low window opening to the street. Through this he could conveniently dispense cigars to passers along the highway.

Mr. Pray was approachable and obliging, and—being a newspaper man—not curious. He had written the story of the wreck of the *Halcyon* for the *Advertiser* a little while before.

"Oh, the Englishman!" he exclaimed, when Wentworth mentioned that he had a particular interest in the passenger. He smiled a little and in a peculiar fashion, as he said it.

"The Englishman?" repeated Wentworth.

"Sure! If your friend is not an Englishman, you are on the wrong track. This man is the most decidely English Englishman I ever saw," replied Pray. "The very first thing that he tells you about himself is that he is an Englishman, and he doesn't have to tell you, at that."

For the rest, Pray said that Ainsworth was a tall man with full gray beard and gray hair. He might be sixty years old, but was well preserved, and carried himself as a much younger man. His eyes were keen with a twinkle in them that reminded you—and he begged pardon—of his questioner. Mr. Wentworth, was it? Thanks! He did not suppose there could be any relationship. But the resemblance was very marked, barring the full beard, of course.

Now, while Wentworth was conscious of a feeling

of relief consequent on Pray's announcement of the nationality of the passenger saved from the wreck of the *Halcyon*, there was left by the newspaper man's manner, even more than by his description of Ainsworth, an impression not comfortable. There was no mockery in the tone with which he had spoken of the Englishman, but there was a palpable something that might have been the shadow of mockery, a hint of ridicule, as though Ainsworth had been found amusing. And yet Pray spoke with perfect seriousness; and with an evident purpose to give all the enlightenment in his power. Certainly there was no perceptible attempt at suppression.

Wentworth, listening with that queer impression of discomfort barely defined in his mind, sought to analyze what it was about Pray's story that had created it. His father, as was the Englishman described, had been a tall man, and it had often been remarked in Wentworth's hearing that father and son were much alike. To be sure, Elliot Wentworth had always gone clean shaven, but the sailor Oleson had said that the *Halcyon's* passenger grew a beard on shipboard. And eyes, and manner, and the whole description from this keen observer of men fitted. But if Ainsworth were an Englishman, then, of course, resemblance ceased to count and the whole matter of the quest was off. He had not come to the islands looking after any vagrant English.

And yet it might have occurred to a fugitive seeking to hide his identity to cultivate the English

manner and so make his disguise complete. The sailor Oleson had not shown himself a keen observer; and the passenger would not be likely to reach any degree of familiarity with the men before the mast, anyhow. Also, the English assumption may have been an afterthought, following some change of purpose necessitated by the wreck. Oleson was on the transport, and could be questioned as to the English part of the tale. And still it did not seem probable in view of the fact that Pray was so evidently sure of what he said that there could be fraud in the thing. Pray was not likely to be fooled

But there was doubt enough in Wentworth's mind, nevertheless, to impel him to follow on the trail of this Norman Ainsworth until he had run the man down and settled the matter. And so he asked: "Is Ainsworth still here—or Captain Graeme?"

"Both, I believe," replied the newspaper man. "Of course you will understand that my interest in the party ended when I had written the story of the wreck. But both gentlemen took their meals here at the Grill. If I am not mistaken, I saw them both here at dinner yesterday, or the day before that. But it will be easy to find out."

He looked across at the piratical man of devilish cast of countenance behind the little counter.

"George!" he called.

The man came across the room, smiling as an amiable Mephistopheles might have smiled upon any one or two of a billion of his particular friends.

"This is Mr. Wentworth of San Francisco," remarked Pray. "He wants to find out something about Ainsworth, the *Halcyon* survivor, you know. This is George Lycurgus, Mr. Wentworth. He is one of the celebrities of Honolulu."

Mephistopheles bowed, and Wentworth bowed. The smile of the piratical gentleman grew even more amiably devilish.

"Ainsworth?" he repeated. "Oh, the Englishman! The man who wore a pongee every day, and who was always with Captain Graeme?"

"That is the man," agreed Pray.

"A gentleman, too!" cried Mephistopheles. "With a fine taste in hock, and a weakness for the best we had in cigars—not that a palate cultivated to good tobacco is weakness! Was he a friend of yours, sir?" with a warmer smile than ever toward Wentworth, as if the friend of a man with a fine taste in wine and cigars was himself a person entitled to consideration. And yet, even under this warmth, Wentworth seemed to be conscious of that lurking shadow of mockery.

"I am not sure," Wentworth said, replying to the question. "He may be a friend for whom I am seeking, or it may be that I am on the wrong track altogether. I am most anxious to know. And what is wrong with him?"

The mockery that seemed to lurk in the manner of this man forced the question.

"Wrong with him?" echoed Lycurgus. "Why, nothing in the world so far as I know!"

"I am glad of that," said Wentworth. "Where can I find him?"

"Why, that is too bad!" cried Lycurgus. "But he is gone!"

"Gone!" echoed Pray. "Where is he gone?"

"Captain Graeme and Mr. Ainsworth both took passage on the *Tenyu Maru* last night," replied Lycurgus. "The captain was booked for Hongkong. I heard Mr. Ainsworth say that he thought he would go to Manila. He did not say it to me, however."

"Why," exclaimed Pray, "I was aboard the *Tenyu* an hour before she sailed! I saw neither of them on board."

"They sailed on her, all the same," said Lycurgus. "They were stopping at my place out Waikiki, you know, and I sent their luggage aboard from there yesterday afternoon. They had dinner here—upstairs—and sat late. They said that they wanted to get away quietly, having had enough of publicity since the wreck of the *Halcyon*. Captain Graeme had a cable from his owners, I believe."

"That accounts for it," said Pray. "They probably went on board after I left the steamer."

He turned to Wentworth. "I am sorry that you have missed your man," he said, "if this is the Ainsworth you seek."

"I am not at all sure," answered Wentworth. "My friend was not English, but that may be a reason the more for me to see this man. The story of the wreck of the *Halcyon* was only published on

the day we left San Francisco. Reading it, and reading that—Ainsworth—had left the *Hancock* here, I thought to look him up if he were still in town."

Pray looked at him curiously. There was a story here his trained intelligence told him easily enough. Whether he could land it was another thing. And, in the meantime, there was always a commonplace.

"You are going through on the *Sherman?*" he asked, politely. "I see she made port this morning."

"Yes," replied Wentworth, with slow deliberation. "I am going through on the *Sherman.*"

He had made up his mind to do that at the moment of speaking. It was the only thing for him to do. Whether or no, he must run this Norman Ainsworth to earth. The doubt in his mind but made that the more imperative.

"You will find Ainsworth in Manila, then," said Pray. "The *Tenyu* will beat you to it, of course, but it is likely that he will stick around for a week or two after he gets there."

"That is true," agreed Wentworth.

And then Pray, who was accustomed in his position to meet all kinds of men intent upon all manner of business, pressed Wentworth to have something more by way of changing the breakfast into a luncheon, and, upon refusal, called a taxi and rode down to the Navy Wharf with him. The island newspaper man did not seek any confidence, hoping, it might have been, to get a line on Wentworth's story aboard the *Sherman*, and Wentworth did not volunteer

any. And when Pray questioned the Quartermaster-Captain, he found out only that Wentworth was a young San Franciscan out to see the world. So, having surer matter for copy in hand, Pray let the thing drop. Maybe he would have followed the scent harder if he had seen the cablegram that came that day to a certain banker in Honolulu from a big San Francisco banking concern. The private banker cabled his correspondent that Wentworth had made certain inquiries, and gone on in the *Sherman*.

Wentworth, whom Upson's forethought had provided for just such an emergency, had seen the Quartermaster-Captain before Pray had, and had arranged to go in the transport. He still occupied his stateroom when the steamer dropped down the Channel that night, cleared the bell buoy, and breasted the western sea for Guam. He had cabled Upson of his purpose to go on, as he had agreed to do on leaving San Francisco.

It was early on the second morning out from Honolulu, and the *Sherman* was making the only ripple in that blue sea for a thousand miles, when he went forward and found the sailor, Oleson, polishing some bits of brass work about the forward rail.

"Oleson," Wentworth asked, in a low tone, stopping close to the sailor as he worked, "was this Ainsworth, the passenger on the *Halcyon*, an Englishman?"

"Why, no, sir," replied the sailor, looking up from his work in some surprise. "I never thought he was. He seemed to be an American, sir."

CHAPTER XI

BEING A LETTER FROM MR. FREDERICK DENT UPSON TO MR. JOHN WENTWORTH, WRITTEN TO THE CITY OF MANILA

My dear Wentworth:—Your sudden departure on the *Sherman* caused something of a flutter in the Pine Street dove côte. And, by the same token, there is reason to believe that you are on the right track. Stringham put me wise to it. The incident took place on the very day that the *Sherman* sailed—which shows a very marked degree of vigilance indeed, and may indicate an interest more than passing in the wreck of the *Halcyon*—but I did not see Stringham until nearly a week afterward; and then the thing came out casually. It was this way: I met Stringham in the St. Francis Grill, and had a drink with him, and in the course of the talk he asked me what had become of you.

I knew that you had not told them at the office where you were going, although it was likely enough that their waterfront man would find out. But Stringham is discreet, and, anyway, there was no good making a mystery of the plain fact of your sailing. So I told him that you were off to the islands

on the *Sherman*, and, still casually, I ended my remark with a query as thus:

"Why?"

"Why," replied Stringham, "I find an interest in the movements of that young man manifested in certain very high financial quarters. Mr. William Chester—you know Chester, of Chester, Wiley & Chester—phoned me the other day to know whether young Wentworth was still on the staff, or what had become of him. The matter being out of my line, I referred him to the City Room."

I did not press the thing with Stringham, but discreet inquiry in other quarters gave me the date, and the news that Chester got the information he wanted. And it may be accepted, if you are on the right track—and the incident goes to show that you are—that letters calculated to thwart you went forward on the *Tenyu Maru*, which left this port two days after you did. She would beat the *Sherman* into Honolulu, a day at least. And the *Tenyu* carries mail, although she carries no passengers to the islands.

If I had found this out soon enough I would have written to you at Honolulu by that steamer. It was of no use to cable. If you were to be blocked—you would find it out, as you probably did. And you would go on, as your cablegram informed me that you certainly did. This letter, which goes by the *China's* mail, will meet you at Manila and advise you in plenty of time.

Comes now a matter of even more importance

than Mr. Chester's anxiety as to your movements, although the two things fit each other. I have got a line, old man, at last. If I am in the right upon it—and I am at least morally certain that I am—it makes it more important than ever that you should find Captain Graeme, late of the *Halcyon*, and his passenger. Indeed, the success or failure of your quest in the Far East becomes the one great factor in the solution of the problem before us.

Allison, you must know, is home from Paris, got home a week or two after you sailed. He came to me on the very day of his arrival. He was in a state of some excitement, which is unusual with him, as you know. The first thing he asked was about you. He wanted to know your movements, what you had been doing, and all about it. I am his legal adviser, you know, and after I had told him all about your concerns, he produced to me, as his legal adviser, he said, some half-dozen debentures of the Market Street Railway Company, which he had picked up at the office of his broker in New York. Knowing that Allison has a fad for putting his money into local securities, this did not excite me to more than a cursory glance at the bonds. I was preparing to put them into a safe place before sending them to the bank for him when he called my attention to some endorsements on them.

Man, those bonds had been issued to William Chester! They had been endorsed by Chester to one Robert Graeme. They had been sold by

Graeme to a bank in Honolulu, which passed them to New York in regular course. They must have gone straight east, and been found by Allison almost on the day of their arrival.

But that is not all. Like all the world, I had seen the published list of securities reported missing when the Bank of the Pacific failed. Unlike most of the world, I had saved a copy of that list. So had Allison. He called my attention to the numbers of these bonds, and I ran for my copy of the list. These debentures were among those that it was reported could not be found when the bank closed its doors. They had been listed as lost by William Chester.

Yet here they were, and with William Chester's endorsement to the captain of the *Halcyon!* What had William Chester to do with the captain of the *Halcyon*, who came to San Francisco only to pick up a passenger, in defiance of the law? Was the endorsement on the bonds a forgery—and, if so, by whom forged? If no forgery has been committed, if William Chester passed the bonds to Robert Graeme after the failure of the Bank, as the endorsement shows, our enemy has put his foot in the trap. Clever, cold, calculating as we know him to be, Chester has shown the weakness common to all great criminals. He has made the fatal and almost inevitable mistake of leaving open one door to detection while thinking he has closed all roads behind him. The chance was about one in a million that this door would be found at that. How could any one

foresee that Graeme would dispose of the debentures at once; and, Graeme disposing of them, how could any one then foresee that Allison would happen along and buy them? Surely, the devil has served his friend a scurvy trick in this.

So much the better for us. The mistake of Chester is colossal, like the miscalculations of Napoleon before Waterloo. You will see, in the light of this development, how essential to victory for our side it is that you should find Captain Graeme—and his passenger. Never mind about money. We will take care of that at this end. Follow your men to the end of the world. And you will probably have Allison to help you by the time you get this letter. At all events, he is going out to Hongkong in the *Korea*, and will join you from there. I have not tried to hold him back. I have not seen him so keen on anything since he left college—and the interest will do him good.

I think I have told you everything there is to know that will interest you, excepting that the papers this morning announce the election of William Chester to the Presidency of the Bank of the Pacific. It was done at a directors' meeting yesterday. Somebody has been made to come across sure. I wonder what the new President would say, in the event that those debenture bonds Allison brought from New York should be presented for negotiation? We will find out, too, one of these days—when our battle line is made.

Oh, yes; and there is talk, in high political quarters, of sending Harran to the United States Senate. It is under the rose, as yet, but the thing will break in due time. "The man who saved the financial situation in the state," and all the rest of it, you know.

Well, good-bye, and good luck to you. Allison will give any details I have omitted or overlooked in this. And don't either of you hesitate to use the cable, if it becomes necessary to tell me anything in a hurry.

Faithfully yours,
FREDERICK DENT UPSON.

CHAPTER XII

AT THE END OF THE WORLD

AND having followed my man to the end of the world," said Wentworth, making a gesture with both hands, as one who politely admits an opponent's promise, "I suppose that it is up to me to jump off. For this place is the end of the world—if it is not Tophet."

He drummed impatiently with Upson's letter, which had fallen folded into his hands after perusal, on the side of his wicker steamer chair in time with the shuffling of thousands of slippered feet along the sun-baked pavements in the Tondo Quarter of Manila. Looking down upon the strangely dressed throng out there in the glaring sunshine from the shaded verandah of the Hotel Oriente, Wentworth wondered in vague fashion how any human energy could rise to activity in that breathless heat? Over his head a creaking punkah just puddled the stagnant air of the verandah, and from the dark of his room came the tiresome buzzing of an electric fan that could no more than send a lukewarm eddy as far as the fluttering ends of its own crêpe paper streamers.

Wentworth had been in Manila just one day. That letter from Fred Upson had waited for him at

the Hotel Oriente for several days while the *Sherman* plowed her way slowly across that sea of summer calms in which the island of Guam sleeps between Honolulu and Cape Angana.

He had seen the bones of the *Halcyon* in the clear deeps without the reefs that shelter San Luis d'Apra from the strong swell of the Pacific, a native taking him across from the transport in company with McGreal and Oleson. And Oleson, under the pouring of the tropic rain that came down upon the waves like the running of a river from the upper air, had gone over the story of the wreck.

The stop at Guam was to no other profit so far as his quest was concerned. The naval officers on the station could tell little. Neither Captain Graeme nor his passenger had gone ashore on the island, so far as the Governor-General knew. Certainly neither of them had taken the trouble to call on that puissant personage. Taken at once from the water on board the *Hancock*, which left for Honolulu on the day following the shipwreck, their casting away had been to the islanders an incident as fleeting as the alighting of a tropic bird in passage.

And then the *Sherman*, after a couple of days in the island harbour, put out across the Nero Deep, rounded the northern point of Luzon, breasted the usual half gale in the China Sea, and, in the early daylight of the thirty-second day out of San Francisco, ran under the shelter of the sea wall that carries the waters of the Pasig out into the bay of

Manila, and dropped her anchor squarely in front of the walled city.

Thence at once in a native banca, Wentworth landed in front of the old Custom House in the Binondo Quarter, and turned on the top of the stone wall holding the yellow current of the river to shake hands with McGreal, who had come ashore on some ship's business in the same boat.

"You will have shore leave to-night?" he asked the sailor, at the same time making a motion with one hand to stop a passing cochero.

"Yes, sir," replied McGreal.

"Look me up at the Hotel Oriente," said Wentworth. "And if you can bring Oleson, so much the better."

These two, in the voyage across the Pacific, he had come to look upon as enlisted in his quest, gaining much comfort in his talks with either as the ship fared on across the still seas. He relied on them for active help, too, now that he had reached the port for which the men he sought were thought to be bound. And if the sailors were to help him, of course it was needful to have a consultation with them. Their investigations must be directed to those parts of the town which their eyes could reach, and his own, most likely, could not. That was to the end that they might see intelligently. The more ground that could be covered, the better was the chance for success. Moreover, both the sailors knew Captain Graeme; and Wentworth had never seen him. He

thought, grimly, that he would be likely to know Ainsworth.

"If Oleson gets shore leave, we will both be there, sir," replied McGreal. "I will come myself, anyhow."

"So long until then!" said Wentworth. He stepped into the waiting carromata, and went plunging away at a furious rate toward the Hotel Oriente, the only guest place of which he knew the name in that thronged city. He found quarters there, a long, low, dark room, opening out into a verandah with shutters of latticed mother-of-pearl shell, and sent to the transport for his luggage. Also, he found Upson's letter waiting him. He read the letter lying in a big wicker chair out in the verandah, with the noise of the shuffling of countless slippered feet and of the strange cries of the natives chaffering in the Tondo Market floating up to him. He felt, as he read, that helpless loneliness a man will feel who sits amidst a throng of his fellows, all strangers to him. He could have shrieked aloud, but the momentary energy of that madness died in him. For, lonely as he was, the climate had him. The languor of the deadly tropical heat was wrapping him about as a miasmatic garment, endowed with the quality of paralyzing that which it touched.

"I suppose," he repeated aloud, still tapping the side of his wicker chair with the letter, "that it is up to me to jump off!"

He knew that he ought to be in action. He felt

the shadow of the impulse. Certainly lying on his back in a shaded hotel porch was never the way to arrive at any definite achievement. He should be out making inquiry at banks or consulates, shipping offices or clubs, for Captain Graeme; striving, somewhere down in that busy crowd, to find trace of the "Englishman" Norman Ainsworth. There were many English in Manila. If the *Halcyon* survivor were still in the town, it would be easy enough to get some track of him. Nothing draws an Englishman in an outland place like another Englishman.

But Wentworth's shadow of an impulse to action was not strong enough to stir him. It needed something from the outside. The cloak of paralysis woven in that deadly heat was wrapping him fold on fold.

"I suppose it is up to me to jump off," he said to himself aloud, and for the third time. "I have come to the end of the world. Well, then! Which way to jump? I wish Frank Allison were here!"

"And, behold! He enters at the word!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAN AND THE HOUR

ALLISON spoke from the doorway of Wentworth's room, standing a cool and smiling figure in white duck against the darkened background of the interior. And at the sight of him the cloak of paralysis that had been wrapping itself about the soul of Wentworth dropped away, and he leaped to meet his friend with all the native energy of his race alert for action.

"When did you get in, old man?" he cried. "Gee! but I'm glad to see you!" He was shaking both Allison's hands as he spoke, and it seemed that he would never quit shaking them.

"I got here two hours ago," replied Allison. "I went through some formalities at the Custom House, and here I am. It was more than you had to submit to, of course, but a skipper does not get past those red-tape fellows as easily as a passenger."

"A skipper?" echoed Allison.

"Surely! A man is permitted to skip his own yacht, I believe—although it is a privilege I would just as soon forego in these typhoon latitudes. Beating around San Francisco Bay is a different thing."

"You don't mean to tell me that you brought the *Sea Spray* across the Pacific?" cried Wentworth.

"Nothing so foolish. I made my escape from Brooks and came over in the *Korea*. But I found a little beauty of a yacht for sale cheap in Hongkong. Clyde built! Steel hull! Bronze keel! Designed by Watson! Schooner rigged! Eighty feet over all! With auxiliary engines and tankage for one thousand gallons of gas! For sale cheap, by a gentleman who is unexpectedly called home by reason of important private affairs! Rated A1 at Lloyd's! Doesn't that sound like an advertisement from a real, live English newspaper published in Asia? Well, the *Lurline* is a beauty, my boy, with comfortable cabins, and a turn of speed that really surprised me, considering that she is English built. More than that, she is provisioned for a cruise around the world. I took account of the stores, running down here—and that was a labour, without a cabin steward. My fellow left at Hongkong. The stores are English, and so of the best. And if the men we seek have gone to the end of the world and stepped off why we can float down into the abyss more comfortably with a good ship under us than in any other possible way."

"In a search among islands we would have to have a boat, too," said Wentworth. "The passages would be wet, inevitably."

"That being the nature of island channels," agreed Allison, politely.

"And of course," went on Wentworth, getting back

to the serious side of his affairs, "if the men are still in Manila we could go home in the *Lurline*—and take one of them with us, if he is the man we want."

"I have not the least doubt that he is the man we want," said Allison. "But he is not in Manila."

"How do you know that?"

"Why, we are here!" replied Allison. "Your friends in San Francisco have already been in communication with the men, knowing that you were on the way. Did you suppose that the departure of Captain Graeme and his passenger from Honolulu on the day before you got there was a coincidence? I passed through Honolulu myself, you know. A cablegram from San Francisco would have sent them out of there in a hurry—and it did. Captain Graeme received the cable."

"Why, Lycurgus told me that!" exclaimed Wentworth, his mind going back to the island, and to his meeting with the proprietor of the Union Grill.

"Sure he did!" cried Allison. "He told me the same thing, incidentally, when I asked about you."

"And did he tell you that the *Halcyon's* passenger was an Englishman?" asked Wentworth.

"An Englishman! Why, no. But I did not ask him about the passenger. My inquiry was as to you only—and I purposely made that casual."

"The *Halcyon's* passenger," said Wentworth, speaking very slowly, "according to all the information I could get in Honolulu, was an Englishman. An Englishman of the English! He was assert-

ively, and if not offensively, at least amusingly, English. It was the most noticeable thing about him. Even in Honolulu, where they are relatively common, it was noted, and, I gathered, would have been, even if he had not always and insistently asserted the fact of his nationality."

"Why, then," said Allison, ruefully, "he cannot be our man!"

"But," went on Wentworth, "in spite of this very notable and noticeable Anglicism, the sailor Oleson did not observe it while he was aboard ship with the man. The sailor thought his shipmate was an American. Maybe it did not occur to Ainsworth to assert his nationality sooner."

"The devil!" cried Allison. "Then you think——"

"Nothing, my son! If Norman Ainsworth is an Englishman, he is likely to be in Manila. If he is only assuming to be English, then it is my view that you would better begin to get the *Lurline* ready for sea."

"Which will not take a day's time," said Allison.

"So much the better," replied Wentworth. "If he is gone, we must follow on. Of course, if it comes to that, an Englishman could go away from Manila, too, but we must still follow on."

"Right you are!" cried Allison. "And now to find out! An Englishman in Manila——"

"Would have his name put up, first rattle out of the box, at the English Club," interrupted Wentworth. "Let us call a carromata and go down at once to

the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank. I have to deposit my letter of credit, and so have you. The cashier will be a big man in the club and he will give us a line."

It was really astonishing, once Wentworth shook off the lassitude of the country with the coming of his friend, how quick he was to spring into action. Within ten minutes after the appearance of Allison at the Hotel Oriente the friends were inside a closed caliso, tearing through the narrow streets and around the sharp corners in the Binondo Quarter at a gait that perilled the life of every passer in the roadway.

"These cocheros missed their destiny in not being born auto speed maniacs," said Allison, as their driver drew up his panting pony in front of the bank.

"Think of having a racer in these narrow streets, without a sidewalk to give a pedestrian any chance at all—and a Filipino devil grinning at the wheel!"

They stepped into the bank, and another closed caliso, which had followed them from the hotel at speed, drew up to the door. The man who got out of it descended slowly, looking first to make sure that the two friends had gone in. This man had an air of furtive jauntiness about him, as if a rat were to turn dude. And he was a little, sallow, smoothly shaven man with a subtle something about his carriage, or his manner, or his face expressive of the deep and old, old craft of Asia.

More, this little furtive dandy of a man had taken a room at the Hotel Oriente the day before,

after spending some hours of the morning lounging about the Custom House—a room adjoining that occupied by Wentworth. And that spite of the fact that he had a den and a family in a hut in a nipa row in the outskirts of the Quarter of Sampaloc. In that quarter he was respectfully spoken of by the neighbours as the Señor Don Miguel di Sousa, and known to have influence in quarters which the neighbourhood regarded with some awe. He enjoyed consideration there, likewise, as the proud father of as promising a litter of young rats as was to be found in any nest in the quarter; and, what was a matter of greater personal pride to him, as the owner of a red game cock which, at three years old, had never been whipped.

The dark little man slipped into the bank immediately behind the two Americans. He was very close to the cashier's desk when that obliging young Englishman said that he himself had put up Norman Ainsworth and Captain Graeme at the club at Malate a week before. They had done some business with the bank. And they had taken a house at 32 Calle San Pedro, in the Quarter of Guiapo. Mr. Ainsworth was an Englishman, of course.

"And he need not have kept on asserting it all the time, either," said the cashier, with a quiet smile.

It was the same kind of thing Wentworth had met at Honolulu, and he looked at Allison.

"Are the gentlemen here now?" he asked.

"Why, no," replied the cashier. "Captain Graeme

received cabled orders from his people in London to take over the command of the *Neried*, of the same line as the *Halcyon*, which had limped into port from the Archipelago a week or two earlier. Her captain passed out down Iloilo way. Black cholera! Mr. Ainsworth told me at the club he would go with his friend. They sailed three days ago."

"Do you know for what port?" asked Wentworth.

"I did not inquire. But they would know over at the Consulate," replied the cashier. "I will give you a note to the Consul, if you like."

"You are very kind," said Wentworth. "The *Neried* belonged to the same people as the *Halcyon*, you say?"

"They have a lot of those tramp freighters, Clarke, Wyse & Compton, of London," replied the cashier.

He penned the note of introduction to the British Consul as he spoke and called a Chinese boy to show the gentlemen the way to the Consulate. It was but a few steps, just around the corner. And the Consul was most obliging. A clerk found, very quickly, that the *Neried* had cleared for Iloilo, in ballast, to get a cargo of hemp for Nagasaki.

"You can cable to see if she is still at Iloilo," said the Consul. "She may be clear away on the other side of the world in a couple of months. If you want to catch her, I should say the surest way would be to head her off at Nagasaki."

Wentworth and Allison thanked the official for his

courtesy, and went back to their caliso, which they had kept waiting.

"I suppose it wouldn't do any good to look up the address in the Guiapo Quarter?" queried Allison, as they went whirling back toward the Hotel Oriente.

"Why, it might be wise to go out there before we leave," replied Wentworth. "We may get some points. But, in my opinion, the first thing is to get the *Lurline* ready for sea. And we should cable to Iloilo. I suppose that the yacht can follow anywhere that a tramp can go?"

"Around the world," answered Allison. "But I wish I had a sailing master. It is so much more comfortable to have a man to stand your watch."

"Why don't you get my friend McGreal?"

"The sailor-highwayman? Could he sail a yacht?" asked Allison.

"I should think so."

"How are we to get him off the transport?"

"I don't suppose he would have any sentiment about holding to that job if he could get anything better. You have only to offer higher pay. And it might be a good scheme to get the sailor Oleson, too."

"That would give us a couple of men we could depend on, surely," said Allison. "That is rather a desirable thing in seas on whose beaches you pick up the riff-raff of the world. I haven't seen a thing out of the way with any of the mixed lot I have but I swear to you, John, that I wouldn't bank on a single

man on the *Lurline* not being safe to cut my throat and turn pirate if he saw his profit in it."

"A cheerful crew!" said Wentworth. "We will get the two men, if we have to steal them from Uncle Sam, but I think we may manage it without that. Anyway, they are both due here to see me to-night, and we will find out."

Their caliso set them down in front of the Hotel Oriente, and Allison took a room next to Wentworth's, the two being thrown into a suite communicating by way of the front verandah. And, on the other side, the dark little Eurasian, crouching behind a shutter whose removal would have made the suite still larger, listened for anything that might be let drop. He had not, unfortunately for the cheese and bread he was expected to provide for that nest of young rats in the Quarter of Sampaloc, been able to worm as much as he would have liked out of the friend of his who was a kind of under clerk in the British Consulate. Nor could he know what talk had taken place between Wentworth and Allison in the caliso on the way to the hotel.

Neither was he aware of the sending of a cablegram to Iloilo in the middle of the afternoon; which cablegram brought an answer from the British Consular officer to the effect that the *Neried* had loaded hemp at that port and sailed that very morning for Nagasaki. But the watcher did know that a cablegram was received. That was the extent of his finding on the afternoon watch. The Mestizo boy who de-

livered it could not tell him where it came from, and dared not let him open it, even in return for several pieces of silver offered.

Still, the day of the rat had not been altogether wasted. Even with no more than the information that he had gained, Señor Don Miguel di Sousa had a very considerable budget to carry to a certain dark office up one flight in the Escolta, on a sign beside the door of which office it was proclaimed, in English, Spanish, Tagallog, and Chinese, that within was the place of business of Eric Hale, private inquiry agent.

Being a man of experience in his trade, Eric Hale sent a cable in cipher to San Francisco on the receipt of Di Sousa's report; and that produced another sent back across the ocean to the care of the steamer *Neried* at Iloilo—to be repeated to Nagasaki. A little later in the day Eric Hale issued certain explicit instructions to Señor Don Miguel di Sousa. And then the old rat crept back to the room adjoining Wentworth's, in the Hotel Oriente.

CHAPTER XIV

A FRIEND—AND HIS CONSCIENCE

AND because the Americans in the verandah, of the Hotel Oriente did not think to lower their voices from the ordinary conversational tone Mr. Miguel di Sousa found, that evening, that the spy who waits gains many things. The old rat only left his post to slip out to the family nest in the Quarter of Sampaloc for a bite of fish and rice while the Americans were at dinner in the ordinary of the hotel. He was on watch again long before they had finished eating, and heard them come back to the verandah and settle themselves, overlooking the night bustle of the street, for their after-dinner cigars.

"I only brought up the subject because you had not asked me a word about it, and because I wanted to discharge my conscience," said Allison, after a bit, as though coming back to a matter which had been in their table talk.

Silence followed for a moment, and then Wentworth said: "How do you connect your conscience with Margaret Graeme?"

The name caught the attention of the rat at once. It might be, of course, that it was not a name with which he would ever have anything to do, but it

was a woman's name; and in women there are infinite capacities for complication. Mr. Di Sousa had been in the spy business long enough to know something of its possibilities.

Wentworth, apparently, was willing to let the matter of Allison's conscience drop when that gentleman did not at once reply to his question.

"Where was the good of letting my thoughts linger on Margaret?" he asked, taking up another phase of the subject. "A woman may dwell in a star. No man can draw her down by looking at her. You left her in San Francisco, I suppose?"

"But I had found her in Paris, and again in San Francisco. She had crossed from Boulogne while I was coming over from Southampton. The old dragon—the aunt, you know, Mrs. Penworthy—was with her both times."

"Bad for you!" and Wentworth smiled. "I had my bout with Mrs. Penworthy at the Coronado. Being unexceptionally rich at the moment, I finally got past the guard."

"She thinks that you are the greatest man on earth!" exclaimed Allison.

"Mrs. Penworthy? That is strange, and not in character. But you should be able to disarm her, old man. You are richer than I ever was."

"It would do no good," replied Allison, just a shade gloomily.

"You are young, passably good looking, have plenty of money, and good table manners, do not

make any bad breaks in dress. At what point do you fail?" asked Wentworth.

There was a tinge of bitterness in the grim humour of that. Allison brought the talk to the sanity of earnestness.

"Margaret Graeme loves you, John Wentworth," he said.

"Nonsense!"

"It is the truth."

"Man!" cried Wentworth, "I am hopelessly out of her class. That I—that I—that she was more to me than any other woman can ever be, I grant you."

It was difficult for him to find words, but he went on after a bit: "If poverty had not come; and, well, dishonour, I would have tried for my happiness as a man may. I do not mind admitting that to you. But not now! Not now!"

"Nevertheless, and in spite of everything, I tell you that Margaret Graeme loves you, John."

"How do you know that she does?"

It was Allison's turn to hesitate at that. "Maybe I have tried!" he said, at last, speaking very slowly, and looking down into the street. "It may be that that is a part of the burden on my conscience. I do not pretend to more probity than another, John. I had the right to try."

"God knows you had!" And then, more slowly, and in a lowered tone: "And it is your right to try again."

"It would do me no good," said Allison. "When

a woman talks of one man to another; when she is interested in the movements of a man only so far as they concern another man, when her eyes fill at the thought of one man's absence, and silence—well, the thing is sufficiently obvious. Love stricken to its death is no longer blind, John."

"Margaret Graeme would never wear her heart on her sleeve!" cried Wentworth, with a manner of resentment that drew a smile in the dark from his friend.

"Not where the world might see," agreed Allison. "I should say she would be much more likely to do things to gain her heart's desire. She is a young woman of action, most emphatically. But I was your friend, remember. Through me lay the only road she knew to any knowledge of your movements."

"And you told her?"

"That is the other part of the burden on my conscience, John. I did."

"Everything?"

"She seemed greatly interested—and, well, I suppose that she got the whole thing out of me."

"That I sailed on the *Sherman*, and the purpose of the trip, and all?"

"That would be about the size of it, old man!"

"That was thoughtful of you," said Wentworth, with just the least fine shade of sarcasm. "I hope that she may prove more discreet than you have been."

"She will never tell anything that will hurt you,

John," said Allison, eagerly. "Be sure of that! But what could she tell? Your intimate enemies in San Francisco do not seem to have any trouble in following your movements, if it comes to that."

"I have nothing to hide—yet!" said Wentworth.

"Surely you have nothing! And what did it matter if she knew? But have I told you that Margaret Graeme seemed strangely familiar with the story of the wreck of the *Halcyon?* I do not believe that women read the shipping news at all, as a rule. And did it ever occur to you that the captain of the *Halcyon* is of the same name?"

"Often," replied Wentworth, answering the last question. "But what of that? It is a common name enough, and I have never, in my thoughts, coupled the two together. This Captain Robert Graeme, coming out of the Clyde and spelling his name that way, is most likely Scotch."

"As Margaret is by birth. Didn't you know that?"

"I know little of her family."

"It is the fact. Old Donald Graeme, her father, quit the sea to find the Yellow Aster mine, and sold it for a million. He went back to Scotland for a wife. Both the children were born in Edinborough. The old man came back to San Francisco when his wife died, and devoted himself to the making of more millions."

"Were there two children?" asked Wentworth. "I thought that Margaret came in for all the millions."

"So she did. But there were two children. The

boy was much older, and he went wild and ran away. That was before you and I had begun to take much notice. But the brother was eight to ten years senior to Margaret. My mother told me about the Graemes a long time ago, when Margaret and I went to the Denman Primary together. I was in love with her even when I was in knickers. The families were neighbours on Nob Hill, you know."

"And the brother? Why did he leave home?"

"Some difficulty about government. Old Donald was a tartar, and maybe the boy was like him."

"Did you ever hear the brother's name?"

"If I ever did, I have forgotten it."

"I wonder——" began Wentworth, and then broke off. "Harran was Margaret's guardian, wasn't he?"

"Only a trustee," replied Allison. "She came into the money a year or two ago."

"But Harran would have known the family history. And he may have kept track of the boy."

"It is probable enough," agreed Allison. "At all events, it is sufficiently remarkable that Margaret should read the shipping news in the papers. And her interest in the *Halcyon* story is at least noticeable."

"There are strange things under the sun," said Wentworth, musingly, but more to himself than to his friend. Then, turning to Allison: "You say that the elder Graeme was a sailor?"

"He was Scotch. There was probably seafaring blood in the family for a hundred years. But here

are our sailor friends, I believe. I suppose that it is settled that we shape a course for Nagasaki?"

"Yes."

A Chinese boy, in a long, white gown knocked at and opened the door of Wentworth's room, and the two sailors from the transport, hats in hand, came forward slowly on to the verandah. Oleson was knuckling his forehead as he came stumbling along through the half darkness. A torrential rush of tropic rain roared across the light of the stars at the same instant, driving the people from the street below into temporary shelter, and drowning the greetings of the party with its thunder on the corrugated iron roof of the hotel. The houseboy pushed out two more reclining chairs from the room, and McGreal and the sailor sat down, the last named just touching the edge of the cane seat, and holding his white duck hat in his hand as he sat. Also, they both took cigars when the boy passed them at a sign from Wentworth. Then the boy went out.

"When did you come ashore?" asked Wentworth, by way of putting the two at ease, as soon as they were seated, and the roar of the rain had passed, and after he had presented Allison in form to the visitors.

"We landed half an hour ago, sir, at the Custom House," replied McGreal, "and took a carromata on. She was unloading, sir, and we could not get away from the ship any earlier."

"Then, of course, you have seen nothing of Captain Graeme—or his passenger?" said Wentworth.

"We have been nowhere, sir," replied McGreal. "But we have twenty-four hours' leave, the both of us, and we'll scour this town to-night and to-morrow, sir."

"It will not be necessary," said Wentworth, to this, "although I'm obliged to you just the same. The men are not here."

"Not here, sir?" exclaimed McGreal.

"We got track of them to-day, Mr. Allison and I. They went to Iloilo in the *Neried*."

"Why, that is one of Clarke, Wyse & Compton's boats, sir," cried McGreal.

"Just so. Captain Graeme is in command of her. Ever been in her?"

"I made the run to Good Hope as a 'prentice in her," said McGreal. "That was my first service with the company."

"Well, you may see her again. We propose to go after her in Mr. Allison's yacht."

"To Iloilo, sir?"

"To Nagasaki. She has already sailed for that port."

"You say I may see her, sir," went on McGreal; "but I am signed on for the whole voyage of the *Sherman*."

"Can't you get a discharge?"

"I might be able to get it, sir. It is not usual."

"What will it be worth to take it?" asked Allison.

"That is a different matter," replied McGreal.

"And Oleson, here, too?" went on Allison, eagerly.

"Now, look here, my men! I have just bought a yacht in Hongkong. I can sail her myself, but I prefer a sailing master, and I would like to pick up a sailor or two in this port, if I can get men that I can depend upon in a pinch."

"I am listening, sir," said McGreal.

"Well, if you can get your discharge from the *Sherman*—or can get away from her—I will give you $150 in gold a month to navigate the *Lurline* under my direction. You know navigation?"

"I took the examination in San Francisco, sir. I have my master's papers."

"This offer will be for one year, say. It may not take that long for what we have to do, but you sign on for the cruise, and if we reach port in less than a year, your wages will run on for that time, anyhow. If you suit me, it may be even longer."

"It is a handsome offer, sir," said McGreal. "Very handsome."

"Do you think that you can make your discharge from the transport upon it?" asked Allison.

"Well, sir, by giving up the couple of months now due me it may be arranged."

"You will not lose anything by that," said Allison. "And about the man here, Oleson?"

"Why, that will be harder," replied McGreal. "I am an officer, when all is told. If I force it, I will be allowed to go. A man before the mast is in harder case."

"It means $100 to him, and another $100 to you,

if he is in the *Lurline* when she leaves here," said Allison. "And I will pay him $50 a month in gold."

"What do you think of that, Arvad?" asked McGreal.

"I can do a good deal for $100 advance, and fifty a month in gold," said the sailor, with a grin that was lost in the dark.

"Then I'll expect you," said Allison.

"Is the yacht here, sir?" asked McGreal.

"I sailed her down from Hongkong myself," replied Allison. "She lies behind the seawall, about 200 yards outside the *Sherman*."

"Which one of them is it, sir?" asked Oleson.

"Which one of them?" repeated Allison. "The *Lurline* was the only yacht in sight when she dropped her hook in the mud this morning. She is a schooner yacht, painted white, with a gold figurehead. And the prettiest lines you ever saw in a yacht built outside of America."

"Well, sir," said Oleson, knuckling his forehead, "there is another of them lying twenty yards to seaward of her, only this one is painted green, and the figurehead of her is silver, sir."

Allison turned to McGreal. "Did you see the other one?" he asked.

"I saw the two of them lying out there at dusk, sir," replied the future sailing master of the *Lurline*. "They looked very chummy and comfortable when we left the transport. Two of a kind. The white yacht is a beauty; but the green one seems a bit more

fine and graceful in her lines, and the spars higher. I should say that she would be an American-built boat."

"The *Lurline* was built on the Clyde," said Allison.

"They don't build any better boats than at those Clyde yards," said McGreal, with a polite manner of conviction.

"Anyway," went on Allison, "my yacht is the white one. And if you care to take command of her, Captain McGreal, it will be well for me to take you on board first thing in the morning. Will it do any good for us to see the transport people in your behalf?"

"I do not think so, sir. And it might make trouble for you. I will meet you at the Custom House in the morning, and we can go out to the yacht in a shore boat. Then I will take her boat and go aboard for my dunnage. If there is to be any row with the old man, I'll face it alone, sir. But you'll find me in charge of the *Lurline* after to-morrow."

"The captain of the *Sherman* will storm, I suppose?" said Allison.

"Like enough, sir. But the storm will pass."

"And about Oleson here?"

"Well, sir; it may be just as well for you not to know too much about him. Sailors often disappear ashore. If he turns up again in the fo'castle of your yacht, that will not be your lookout."

"Very well," said Allison. "I leave it to you."

The two sailors had risen to their feet, and Wentworth said, seeing them thus prepared to go: "I

suppose you two will want to see something of the town to-night?"

"Why, sir, if you gentlemen don't mind," replied McGreal. "We thought we would go down to the Alhambra for a song and a bottle of beer, and then, maybe, run around town for a bit."

"You would better arrange to come back and stop here to-night," suggested Allison.

"That's as may be, sir," replied McGreal, smiling slightly. "You don't either of you gentlemen think it would be worth while to have a look about here for Captain Graeme—or his passenger?"

"Why, no," replied Wentworth. "We know that they sailed from Iloilo."

"But there is one thing that I would like to have you see to, Mr. McGreal, if you will," said Allison. "The cabin steward of the yacht left her in Hongkong, and I was in too much of a hurry to get another one there. If you can find me a good China boy here, I wish you would."

"Why, sir," replied McGreal, "I don't take kindly to a Chinaman aboard ship."

"I don't stipulate for a Chinese," smiled Allison. "Any likely boy who can do the work will answer."

"It shall be attended to," replied McGreal.

And it was. McGreal and the sailor Oleson had hardly got their beer set before them on a little table in the Alhambra, looking out on the moving lights along the Pasig River, before the sailing master of the *Lurline* noticed a Eurasian half caste, of slight

build, and with the air of the cabin steward in every line of him, from his natty white hat to his white duck trousers, red sash, and canvas shoes, sipping frozen absinthe, and emitting deep sighs the while, at the very next table to them. From his sighing, and the general air of depression upon him, he was evidently a cabin steward most decidedly down on his luck. McGreal watched him for a moment, caught his eye, and beckoned to him, after the manner of the quarterdeck. And the doleful one came. He would have been no cabin steward, else.

"Got a ship, mate?" asked McGreal, patronizingly.

"Not any, sar," replied the Eurasian. "And I am on this beach many weeks. We got laid off at the end of charter here, sar; and nothing I can find to do it any more. *Madre di Dios!* I can find no ship, it is two or t'ree days and I can not eat, sar!"

"Well, I'll fix you," cried McGreal. "Finest yacht in these waters. Ever sail in a yacht?"

"Sar, many time!"

"We lost our cabin boy at Hongkong. Didn't know when he had a good thing! Forty dollars, gold, a month, and twenty advance if you'll see me at the Custom House at ten to-morrow morning."

"I will be there, sar!" said the Eurasian, gratefully. "I will be there. *Madre di Dios!* Never be to fear on account for me, sar!"

So Mr. Miguel di Sousa, making a late report at the office in the Escolta, had obeyed orders, and secured his berth aboard the *Lurline*. The rat will find the ship.

CHAPTER XV

THE GREEN YACHT

MR. MIGUEL DI SOUSA squatted beside a very small camphor-wood chest set on the edge of the seawall just in front of the Manila Custom House, a figure of patience in the midst of the hurry and bustle of the quay alongside the Pasig. He held, under one arm, a red game rooster, and soothed the nervousness of the bird now and again by a gentle touch on its slim and shapely head. It was well enough, in the way of duty, to separate himself by the width of the city from this passion of his life. He could *not* have borne separation overseas. And he waited because it was not for him to be late for his appointment with Captain McGreal.

Presently, breaking through the swarm of caribou carts and carromatas, squat Tagals, and naked, shining Chinese coolies, the spy saw the tall form of McGreal come surging on, like a great liner that plows a way amidst many lesser craft to get into dock. And, at the same moment, Allison leaped out of a closed caliso that had stopped just in front of where Mr. Di Sousa sat beside his camphor-wood chest.

"We are both on time, Captain McGreal," said Allison, shaking hands with the sailor.

"Yes, sir; and here is the new cabin steward of the *Lurline*."

Di Sousa had risen quickly as the two came up, and now touched his hat.

"This the man?" queried Allison. And then, to Di Sousa: "What are you doing with the chicken?"

"Sar!" replied Di Sousa, his point of pride touched at once, "it is el Rio Rey. Never yet has this bird been beaten."

He spoke in a soft, sibilant voice, and with an accent Allison could not place—an elusive, musical intonation, suggestive at once of the tongue of the Latin and of some older Asian people.

"What is your name?" asked Allison next, looking at the man in puzzled fashion. There was a vague impression that he had seen him or heard his voice before, but it passed.

"Miguel di Sousa, sar!"

"You have served as cabin boy?"

"Sar, many times, in many ships."

"You are Eurasian, I think?" said Allison.

"I am born in Macao, sar."

"I thought so. What ship were you in last?"

"Sar, it is the *Montrose Castle*; port of London. We are laid off on this beach for the end of charter, sar."

"Well, I guess you'll do," said Allison, "if Captain McGreal is satisfied. Are you ready to go on board?"

"Sar, here is el Rio Rey. I am ready."

Allison smiled, and, stepping to the end of the seawall, motioned to the Tagal in one of the many bancas lying tied alongside.

"Here, you!" he cried. "We want two bancas!"

Half a dozen little brown men in their waiting canoes sprang into swift activity, paddles in hand and each contributing his share to that clamour which attends on any labour done or attempted by Asiatics.

"Come on!" said Allison to McGreal, stepping into the first banca that came under him. Then, turning to the waiting Eurasian, "You take the next boat, Miguel, and follow on. Get the nigger to tumble your chest in."

The loading of the chest was a noisy business, too, but it was done at last, and then the two bancas, one behind the other, shot out into the stream and went swiftly down with the tawny current of the Pasig.

They swept thus around the edge of the seawall, the boatmen scarcely using their paddles excepting for the purposes of steering, as long as they were in the river. But once they breasted the waters of the bay, the two Tagals in each boat dipped their broad blades in furiously. In twenty minutes after leaving the Custom House the bancas drew up, one after the other, to the gangway hanging down from the port side of the *Lurline*.

They had passed close under the stern of the green yacht as they came along and Allison read the name of her, set in silver letters, "*Petrel*, New York."

He noted the trim lines of her, and the tall, rakish spars, and the screw well down by the stern.

"Looks like she might be able to go some," he said to McGreal.

"Sure thing, sir. And to make good weather in most any going."

Several of the crew in neat green and white suits lounged about the forward deck of the yacht and a Negro came and looked down over the after rail as they passed, showing every bit of ivory that he had in his head. But of her cabin people, there was none in sight.

"I suppose her people are ashore, sightseeing, sir," said McGreal.

"I'd like to challenge them to a race," said Allison, the sporting instinct in him rising strongly at sight of the beautiful craft.

"She might give you all you wanted, at that, sir," said McGreal, and then, the banca drawing in close to the white hull of the *Lurline*, the sailor went on, "but this is a beauty, too. Ought to walk around anything in the water near her measure."

"She's the real thing, all right," replied Allison, but he stopped at the head of his gangway to look across once more, longingly, at the green yacht. Then he turned, courteously, and welcomed the new captain aboard.

After that formality, to put McGreal in possession of the captain's office was the work of but a few minutes. There was the form of calling to the break of

the poop such of the crew as were aboard and introducing the new commander. The *Lurline* carried a cook, eight men, and a mate, of such as are to be picked up commonly in Asian ports. Four of the men were on shore leave that morning. The other four, with the mate and the cook, came aft and ducked to their new officer, a service of grog by the cook, at Allison's order, tending to carry the introduction off well. The mate, a great, white, blue-eyed Norseman, with a tawny mane like a lion's came up on the quarterdeck and was introduced by name as "Mr. Andressen."

"We will want to get out of here first thing in the morning, Mr. Andressen," said McGreal, sizing up the mate in one comprehensive glance. "Mr. Allison tells me that the yacht is provisioned for a long cruise, and that you had orders to get water aboard to-day. There will be nothing to hold us, then. And I wish you would get out my gig for me."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the man addressed. "The other four men will be aboard at dark, sir."

He turned, at that, and McGreal watched him swing his great six feet of body forward along the main deck.

"A Viking, sir," he said, turning to Allison. "I think we may count on that man in a pinch."

"Yes," replied Allison. "I believe that Andressen is an honest man."

"It is one to the good," said McGreal.

Then, while a couple of sailors were lowering the yacht's gig from the davits under the stern of her, and

a couple more were hoisting Di Sousa's camphor-wood chest aboard—the game cock was carried up very tenderly by its owner—Allison took his new sailing master into the cabin of the yacht. It was all in white, picked out in gold beading, and the furnishings were of bird's-eye maple. Six roomy cabins fitted with brass beds and stationary washstands opened from the main saloon, three on either side, and there was a roomy tiled bathroom, with hot and cold taps, away aft.

Running forward from the cabin to give access to the main deck, a narrow passageway opened to two large rooms, one on either hand; that on the starboard side for the captain and on the port for the mate. And, still forward of these, were two cabins of smaller size. The one on the port side was filled with a general litter of sails and cordage, and was used as a sewing room by the crew in mending sails. The starboard cabin, adjoining the captain's, was fitted for the use of the cabin steward, with a sideboard handy. Di Sousa was already in the place when Allison showed it to the captain, his camphor-wood chest under the bunk and the game chicken tethered by a soft leather holdfast to a staple behind the door.

Returning to the saloon, Allison touched an electric button set in the head of the cabin table, and, in a moment, Di Sousa came in softly from the 'midships passageway.

"Ready for duty, Miguel?" asked the owner.

"Sar, I am ready!"

"Very well; the captain is going on a little expedition of his own, and while he is away, I will show you where the things are kept."

Turning to McGreal, he went on: "I will wait here until you come back from the transport. Then we we will go ashore together and get ready to clear the yacht."

McGreal left him with the new steward, and, within the hour, was back again. A couple of the crew hoisted aboard the *Lurline* a second camphor-wood chest, much larger than Di Sousa's, which was stowed away in the captain's cabin.

"Have any trouble, Captain?" asked Allison.

"Not a great deal, sir. The Old Man stormed about a bit at first, but he let me go."

"Well," said Allison, "I am glad that is settled, so far. Now for the shore, and clearance. We will take the gig, this time, and bring Wentworth off with us. Then we can drop down the harbour at daylight."

The few formalities needed to clear the yacht for Nagasaki were got through with very quickly, although the business involved a second and formal visit to the British Consulate. Allison telephoned to Wentworth at the Oriente from the Custom House, and the two friends went together to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank for their letters of credit, and afterward to the Consulate. The cashier and the Consul both regretted, politely, that they could not have the pleasure of showing the Americans the hospitalities

of the club. The Consul readily gave McGreal a license on his American papers.

Late in the afternoon Wentworth and Allison, with McGreal, went off to the yacht, again passing close to the *Petrel*, and again seeing no one on board that craft but the lounging members of her crew. The four absent members of the *Lurline's* crew, a Jap, two Lascars, and a Portuguese Negro, came tumbling aboard from a banca after dark. Their white duck uniforms were pretty badly soiled, but they all seemed sober, which was a blessing. And, away along in the night, while Allison and Wentworth sat smoking under the poop deck awning, there was a subdued hail from the water, and another man came over the side out of a banca, was received with a few whispers at the head of the gangway by McGreal, and slunk away forward.

"Oleson, I suppose?" muttered Allison in a low tone.

Wentworth kept on smoking for a little. "It seems to me we have rather a mixed crew, Frank," he said, at last.

"Rather," agreed Allison. "I rely upon the last two ingredients added to hold the mixture stable."

"McGreal and Oleson?"

"That's right! A Dane and an Irishman. We can depend upon them, backs to our backs. And I believe that the mate is an honest man."

"Andressen, is it, you call him? Yes; I like Andressen. He is a splendid specimen of manhood."

"Magnificent! Looks like a Norse god—but may be a Norse devil."

"A devil, depend upon it, can be a very serviceable friend," said Wentworth. "But there are many kinds of devils. And, apropos, your new cabin boy has a face that is not calculated to inspire confidence, although his notion of bringing the game cock along pleases me."

"I rather like that myself," agreed Allison. "Although it is no proof of probity. I have known a murderer make a pet of a canary bird. This fellow is a rat."

"He looks like a rat," said Wentworth. "On the whole, it is a queer gang. I saw the four that came aboard to-night. What are the others like?"

"One is a Finn and there are two Chinese. I do not know what the fourth one is, some kind of mixture from down Celebes way. The cook claims to be a Solomon Islander. They are cannibals, you know, and he looks the part. He is the ugliest devil I ever saw, out of a jail."

"There are possibilities in the lot," said Wentworth. "The very diversity of the elements may make for peace, but it is a lucky thing the inducements are rather to serve us than to cut our throats. You keep the arms aft, I suppose?"

"All but the brass four-pounder. And the powder for that is in the magazine aft. There are a couple of dozen cutlasses on the rack in my cabin, and six Lee-Metford carbines in the bathroom cuddy. And we have our revolvers. Those are all the arms aboard."

CHAPTER XVI

FOLLOWED TO SEA

THE mixed crew worked with a will in the early gray of the morning to get the *Lurline's* anchor out of the mud, and long before the sunbeams began to redden the sky behind the white city the yacht dropped down across the glassy waters of the bay, past Marrivales, and out through the Boca Chica into the short chop of the China Sea. There had not been, as she ran down with the engines working smoothly, the faintest ripple of wind. Corregidor lay mirrored in the sea like a picture of two islands, one upon the other; and every banca moored beside the pier before the village of nipa huts, every native that moved along shore or about his boat, found his reflected double following his movement in the underworld of the water.

Yet out at sea the short waves ran under the sun that rose from the red and golden glory of its crimsoned couch in the clouds, each wave tipped with a twinkling cascade of shining jewels as the long gusts of wind out of the northeast reached down to touch the surface of the water.

"It will be blowing strongly enough by the time we are abreast of Lingayon Gulf," said Allison, turning

from contemplation of the shore line of Luzon to speak to Wentworth.

They stood together at the stern rail, watching the steep shores recede and the strong waves as they ran, while Captain McGreal, well forward on the poop, kept the crew jumping to get sail on her.

"I hope it will not turn to a typhoon," replied Wentworth, "at least until we are clear of Cape Angana."

"No danger of that, so long as this wind holds," said Allison. "If a typhoon should strike us, with no more offing than this, we would not be likely to get even as far as Lingayon. McGreal handles her well, doesn't he?"

"And himself better. He is going to make good in his first command. He is getting sail on her now to save gas."

"That's what!"

And the new captain was showing himself a master hand in the handling of a schooner—which is a different trick from sailing a square rigger. He had put the engine at half speed and got the jibs on her the moment she was clear of the little mouth of the harbour. In a little more the foresail was shaken out, and then the main. And, as Allison spoke, he called two men forward and two aft to go aloft and break out the topsails. Then only he stopped the engine.

The schooner was standing straight out on the wind, and it was evident that McGreal wanted to get every inch there was in it out of her while the breeze held fair. The green and rugged shores of Luzon were

dropping astern fast and faster with each passing moment.

"I want to get a good offing," the captain said, at last, coming aft to Allison and Wentworth as the topsails bellied out and were sheeted home. "This China Sea is a nasty bit of water, sir. It will not do to lie on a lee shore and trust to Providence."

"There isn't much danger of a typhoon at this time of year," said Allison.

"There is not," agreed the captain. "And the glass holds up well. All the same, I'll feel better when she's clear of Cape Angana, with the whole North Pacific to dart out into. I don't take kindly to running among islands. The green yacht has followed us out, sir."

Allison and Wentworth looked astern, at that, very quickly. There, sure enough, was the *Petrel* of New York, standing straight out from the harbour, and following, as nearly as might be, the course of the *Lurline*.

"That fellow wants an offing, too," observed Captain McGreal. "You may get your will of her and have a race yet, sir."

"Now, wouldn't that beat you!" exclaimed Allison. "Where do you suppose that fellow is going?"

"Let's take your glass, Frank," cried Wentworth. Then, after holding it to his eye for a moment: "There are women aboard her. Look!"

Allison took the glass which Wentworth held out to him.

"That is so," he said. "There are two of them on the poop, and I suppose the man standing with them is the skipper. We have been lacking in yachtsmen's courtesy, John. We should have called on the *Petrel* in the harbour."

Wentworth made no reply to this. His mind ran upon things graver than the mere forms of politeness.

"I wonder," he said, after a little, still watching the yacht astern of them, "if they can be following us?"

"We will soon know whether they are on the same course, anyhow," said McGreal.

The *Lurline* held on as she was until the hills of Luzon were but a dim blur, lying all along the eastern horizon—and the *Petrel* held on, likewise, maybe a mile astern of her. Just before noon the *Lurline* wheeled like a white bird upon the water, going off on a long tack into the northwest, with the wind abeam and still fair, and looking back over the stern rail, Allison and Wentworth saw the *Petrel* wheel, also, and still follow on.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WAY OF A MAN—AND THE WAY OF A MAID

NOW it is a fact that two yachts out of Manila might very well take the same course to get a proper offing without the one astern being fairly suspected to be in chase of the other. And while the people in the *Lurline* had, perhaps, some reason to suppose that they might be followed, ashore or afloat, as a matter of fact, after that first conjecture on the part of Wentworth, none of them for the moment gave very serious thought to the possibility that the *Petrel* was in pursuit.

The *Lurline* stood well away from the shore all day and all night, and as long as Wentworth and Allison sat smoking on deck under the awning aft they could catch occasional glimpses of the lights of the *Petrel* where she was holding a position about a mile astern and a little to the windward of them. The breeze held abeam all night long, and, for a bit of water with the reputation that it bears among mariners of all nations, the China Sea was well behaved.

By daylight, according to the judgment of McGreal, the *Lurline* had northing enough to clear Angana in the event of a shift of the wind into the cyclone quarter. And the *Petrel*, still holding the same relative

position astern, had attained, of course, the same advantage.

"That fellow is heading up for Hongkong, I suppose," said Wentworth, coming on deck after his morning coffee.

"Why, yes, sir," replied the captain. "But I do not make out why he did not run away from us in the night."

"Could he have done that?"

"It's plain enough you are no sailor, sir. Do you not see that we have about everything on her that it is wise to carry in cruising, topsails and all? And everything we have drawing? Well, we have carried on all through the night, and got everything out of her that the wind would give us. And that fellow is running close hauled, and without his topsails. At that, he has held his place all night long!"

"You think the green yacht the better sailor, then?" asked Wentworth.

"She could sail rings around us, sir."

"Why, then," said Allison, who came on deck at the moment, "it is perhaps just as well that I did not challenge her people to a race."

"You would have been beaten hollow, sir," said McGreal.

"You mean to say she has kept up with us close-hauled while we have been carrying on?" asked Allison.

"Just that, sir!" replied the sailing master.

Allison whistled.

"Do you think," asked Wentworth, the notion of the day before coming back to him, "that they are following us?"

"I do not think that I have enough to go upon to say that, sir," replied McGreal, slowly. "But we will find out to-day, or, at the latest, to-morrow morning."

"How?" asked Allison.

"Why, sir, do you see, we will be high enough up by dark for that fellow to begin to shape a course in for the China coast; if he is bound for Hongkong. With this breeze of wind, indeed, he could make better time now by bearing away to the westward. But some captains like to keep plenty of sea room, and it may suit his notion to get more northing and then run down for the island on the wind. If he holds the same course all night to-night that he held last night—why, then we will see."

"How will we see?" persisted Wentworth.

"Why, sir," replied McGreal, "to-morrow morning should put us well up toward the entrance to Formosa Channel if this slant of wind holds. Even if the wind falls off, and we have to trust to the engine, we can do it, bar a big blow. Well, then! If that fellow is still following us to-morrow morning, I intend to put about and run down and speak to him."

"He may still be making for a port above Hongkong," suggested Allison.

"No harm done if he is," replied McGreal. "But

if he is following us he will never permit us to come within hailing distance of him."

"That seems likely, too," said Wentworth.

"Surest thing you know, sir," said McGreal, stepping away at the same moment to speak to the man at the wheel.

The *Lurline* held on her course all day; and the green yacht attended her as closely as any consort. Allison and Wentworth, indeed, began to feel a kind of sea friendliness for the beautiful craft, and that despite the possibility, recognized by both, that she might be dangerously hostile to them and their purpose. She was so fine to look upon! She held her place with such a mastery of sea craft—as though the soul in her ruled and spurned the running waves! Even in waters that bore so much of man's treachery as the China Sea, it did not seem possible that so fair an exterior as that of the green yacht could cover a menace.

Those on the *Lurline* could see the people on the deck of the other yacht very plainly: two women in reclining chairs aft, as there had been the day before, and the man in uniform of white trimmed with green, and with a sparkle of gold at his cuffs. This man seemed to be full of the cares of his vessel. Although there was a chair placed for him aft, close to the the chairs of the women, he sat in it but little. Usually he was up and about the deck, giving quick orders to the men who moved about forward, speaking to the man at the wheel, studying the sea or the

horizon, watchful, alert, as a sailing master should be.

The women, on the other hand, took matters very easily. Perhaps they had full faith in the skill of their sailing master. They were in white and green, and one of them seemed intent upon some fancywork in her hands. The other sat reading, or looking idly on the changing beauty of the sea. Through the glass, indeed, Allison and Wentworth could see that the book took but little of her attention, lying neglected, for the most part, in her lap.

Once she rose, a tall, graceful figure, and picked up a marine glass from the cabin skylight. Wentworth, lying back in his steamer chair, was watching her through a glass at the moment himself. And something seemed to flash across to him as she looked, an electric shock. The meeting in space of human thought waves it might have been.

"By God!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet, and still holding the glass to his eye. "By the living God!"

"What is it?" asked Allison, looking up quickly.

"The woman!" cried Wentworth. "It is not possible! I must be crazy! Yet I would swear it to be the figure of Margaret Graeme!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Allison.

"Do I not say that I must be crazy?" replied Wentworth. "But take the glass and look."

CHAPTER XVIII

"LET HER FOLLOW HER WAY"

WENTWORTH handed the binocular to his friend as he spoke, and Allison, who had risen, focussed the glass to his sight.

"It does resemble her," he admitted, after a long, slow look. "I cannot distinguish the face plainly at this distance, but it does look like her. Could Margaret Graeme, by any possibility, be here?"

"You told her of my plans," said Wentworth, in reply. "You may have been putting into her hands more than you dreamed. If Captain Robert Graeme is her brother? By George! We must find out about this!"

"We are not sure that it is Margaret Graeme," said Allison.

"I believe that it is," said Wentworth. "The first thing is to make sure."

He motioned McGreal toward him as he spoke.

"Captain," he asked, "when did you mean to find out whether the yacht out there is following us?"

"To-morrow morning, sir, when we are well up toward the entrance to Formosa Channel."

"I think that we can prove it earlier," said Wentworth.

"How so, sir?"

"Both Mr. Allison here and myself are inclined to think that we recognize one of the women on her as—well, as a friend of ours," replied Wentworth. "If we are correct in our conjecture, the yacht must be following us. And we can prove it this moment by running down as if to speak her."

"A woman, you say, sir?" queried the captain.

"A woman, yes."

"A woman who would be interested in following you, sir? I beg your pardon, but would it be for the woman's reason?"

"It might be that—or another," admitted Wentworth, flushing.

"I think it is that," said Allison.

"Just so," said the captain. "And would her other reason, if she has another reason, be connected with the purpose of our cruise?" asked the captain.

"We think so," replied Wentworth.

"Friendly interest?" persisted the captain.

"I don't know," said Wentworth.

"I should say friendly, decidedly," struck in Allison.

"Why, then, sir," said McGreal, "if you will permit me to make a suggestion, it would be that it is unwise to go about now, and attempt to force the hand of the people in the other yacht."

"Why?" asked Wentworth.

"Well, you see, sir, a woman's purpose is generally

different from a man's purpose, and she goes about the accomplishment of it in a different way."

"More subtle?" suggested Allison.

"That is the word, sir. A man never puts his foot into another man's game but he takes a chance at marring it. Ladies are different; and this one, being a friend of yours, if so be that you are in the right of it as to that, is no doubt following you with the notion of helping you in her own way and at her own time. Being a woman, she probably has the whole thing mapped out, sir. And if she hasn't she will be all the quicker to act on the spur of the moment for trusting to the chapter of accidents.

"More than that, sir, my experience of the China Sea is such that a friendly consort is a thing that any seaman would be wise to keep at hand, so be that he could. Now, as a woman, your friend will only want to help you in her own way, and it is likely that she won't want you to know who is doing the helping. If we go about now, and show her that we suspect her, why, we are as likely as not to frighten her clean out of the whole adventure."

"That sounds altogether reasonable," said Allison. "But who would have suspected an old sea dog of such deep knowledge of the ways of the sex?"

"It is reasonable, sir," replied McGreal, putting the jocular imputation aside with a blush. "If that fellow there," indicating the *Petrel*, "is still on our track to-morrow morning, we will know pretty well that he is following us without any test about it.

And we will not have given our own hand away, either."

"I suppose that is so," said Wentworth.

"It is so," went on McGreal. "And if they are following us, and the lady on board is a friend of yours, I should say that the yacht is more likely to drop alongside at a critical moment and lend a hand than to hurt us."

"Much more likely" agreed Allison.

"It comes around to the same thing, then," said the captain. "It will pay us not to let on at any time that we suspect we are being followed. Even if that yacht runs up into Formosa Channel behind us, it is no particular harm, that I can see—that is, always provided that the green yacht carries your friends.

"And, on the other hand," continued McGreal, "if the yacht is following us with her movements directed by those who are not friends I do not see how we are to shake her off. And what the devil are you doing here?"

He broke off, suddenly, to hurl his question at the steward, Di Sousa, who had crept up on deck and had been standing, none of them could say how long, very close to the three men as they talked.

"Sar," responded the Eurasian, "I come to say that the breakfast, she is serve!"

"Come up in front of me, and speak out, then!" said McGreal, sternly. "Go on below!"

And as the Eurasian bowed and effaced himself, the captain turned to Allison and Wentworth.

"There are times when that chap reminds me of a rat, with his sneaking ways," he said. "As I was saying, sir, if that yacht is an enemy I do not well see how we are to shake her off. She has the heels of us. And it is possible for her to do a lot of harm, too."

"In case we should sight the *Neried* out here?" suggested Allison.

"That's one thing, sir. She could run down ahead of us to cut the tramp off and give warning. And at the last, she could beat us into Nagasaki and do the same thing."

"Which is what she will be more likely to do," remarked Wentworth.

"I am not so sure," replied the captain, who had been glancing all around the horizon as he talked, after the manner of seamen. "There is a steamer now off to windward."

He pointed, as he spoke, to a long smudge of smoke lying low along the eastern horizon. And then he trained his glass, and studied the point for a moment or two where the smoke seemed densest.

"I may be wrong," he went on, "but she is certainly heading up the coast. These seas are much frequented, still, that may be the *Neried* bound north from Iloilo. If we are to see her at all it should be somewhere along about here that we would pick her up."

Allison and Wentworth had both looked at the smudge of smoke as soon as McGreal pointed it out.

And with about as much satisfaction as untrained men usually get from such things at sea. Away off there to windward, maybe five miles distant, a steamer was passing. They could make out her two sticks and a double funnel through the glass. And that was all.

"The *Neried* has two sticks and a double funnel," said McGreal.

"Will you head out toward her?" asked Allison.

"I do not see the good, sir," replied the captain. "We are safe to cross her, going as we are; and we are making better weather on this course. If that is the *Neried*, she cannot get away from us now, and we will just about run her down in Formosa Channel. Those tramps are slow tubs."

The interest of the two friends came back again to the *Petrel* and the woman in her. She had seated herself again in the deck chair, but through the glass Wentworth could see that she still studied the group on the after deck of the *Lurline*. Agreeing in the entire reasonableness of the proposition of letting a woman and her purposes alone, neither Allison nor Wentworth, as they went below to breakfast, was yet ready to give up the purpose to come at last, in some way, to close quarters with the *Petrel*.

CHAPTER XIX

ALONE UPON A STORM-TOSSED SEA

A CRUISE at sea is like the life of a man in this: that day by day routine duties arise and are performed; and work is left lying, half forgotten, along the course which yet leads surely to the crisis of man's performance. The routine duties hold the day's interest, no more. Men, other men, contemplate the catastrophe and point out, one to another, how the avoidance of this one error, or the better performance of that task, would have changed the sum total. And yet no man avoids the error or betters the performance in the work of his own life.

For three days the *Lurline* stood up along the China coast, well out at sea, heading for the Formosa Channel to the leeward of Patas on her course for Nagasaki. For three days the *Petrel* followed approximately on the same course, sometimes far to windward, sometimes almost out of sight, but always giving those on the *Lurline* to know that they were not to be permitted to get out of view. With the slant of wind out of the northeast, which held steady, this was easy enough for the faster boat to do.

The people in the two yachts saw many smudges of smoke along the horizon. Those be populous seas.

Great numbers of the crowded junks of Hangchau, running down the coast on the wind and with their painted eyes staring dead ahead, passed them. Once the *Lurline* went close to a big P. & O. liner, holding down from Shanghai with a bone in her teeth; and again, one day, a beautiful white cruiser of the American navy raced past, bound north, spurning the waves like some swift sea bird, and dipped her colours in salute. And in the many vessels sighted, far off and close at hand, and in the passing of the nights, it happened, naturally, that the particular smudge that had been thought to mark the passing of the *Neried* was lost. It did not make a great deal of difference. It might have been difficult to deal with the tramp at sea. Her next port of call was known, and the *Lurline* people counted on beating her to it. The chance of an encounter before reaching Nagasaki had hardly been more than reckoned on as among the possibilities.

In the afternoon of the third day, with the two yachts well up into the Channel, the slant of wind that had held on for so long died in long, wailing gusts. The breeze became fitful, chopping all around the compass. The sails of the *Lurline* falling over against the booms slatted with the roll of the sea, cracking as a pistol cracks. The long booms creaked dismally as they swung over, catching with a sickening jerk at the end of the swing, and every block in her rigging groaned. It seemed, momentarily, as if the slatting would jerk the sticks out of her.

"We are in the lee of Formosa, I suppose," said Allison to McGreal, catching the after rail quickly, as he spoke, to keep his steamer chair from sliding clear away across the deck.

"Aye," replied the captain, casting a long look astern. "That is like enough. But I don't like the look of the sky, sir; and the glass is running down."

Wentworth, who sat in another chair alongside that of Allison, rose at that and went into the cabin companionway to consult the aneroid kept hanging there.

"Gee!" he exclaimed, as he came back and sat down again. "It is going down with a run."

"It will come on for a good blow out of the south, and I wouldn't wonder," said Captain McGreal.

"A typhoon?" asked Allison.

"It would be hard to say, sir. But this Channel is in their regular course, blowing out to sea."

"Not exactly the best place to be caught?" suggested Allison.

"Why," replied McGreal, "there are better places. I thought that the slant of wind that has failed would have carried us through, but we must even make shift anyway not to be caught in here, if we can help it."

He stepped to the break of the poop as he spoke.

"Forrard there, Mr. Andressen!"

The mate, who was stirring up the men to the polishing of brasses and the general painting and brightening of things forward, after the manner of

mates when work is to seek on shipboard, answered at once:

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Rout out that engineer and get some way on her!" cried the captain. "Let him turn her over for all she has, at that! And get the sails off her and fold away the cabin awnings! Make all snug. And get it done lively, now! It is no use, this slatting." The captain came back to Allison and Wentworth, having seen the bustle of obedience to his orders begun.

"They are doing the same thing on the *Petrel*, sir," he said. "She has lost the wind, too."

A glance astern, to where the other yacht had been rolling a mile or two to windward, showed that she was indeed getting her sails in with a run, and beginning to gather way as her screw turned. In another moment the exhaust of the *Lurline* began to talk, too; there was a gurgling sound as the steersman threw her over a point or two to meet the long seas running out of the northeast and the yacht moved forward, lightly and easily, in obedience to the screw.

The sea went down very fast. One hour before sunset the Formosa Channel lay like a lake about the schooner, only the long heave of the lazy ground swell rising and falling. It was a lake of bright coppery tinge, reflected from the glowing face of a malignant sky. And the sun, on the western edge of the waves, was just a great shield of red-hot brass,

alive and quivering. And it changed its shape as it went down until it became a fiery, giant, humming top that seemed to spin dizzily before it plunged, point foremost, into the sea.

All along the southern horizon, as the sun sank, a mountain range of clouds was growing out of the ocean. It was a fair range of golden hills at first, but it darkened, deep ravines and then towering summits, through copper and bronze to blue-black as the day died. And, in the red afterglow, it shone with soft rose colour in all the changing depths of its peaks and valleys.

Then, as the red faded out, streams of fire darted from peak to peak across the deep black cañons of cloudland, and the thunder crashed and echoed and rumbled amidst the summits as when a summer tempest rolls among the mountains of the earth.

"I wish we were well out of this damned Channel!" said Captain McGreal, standing to watch the clouds as they climbed, high and higher, into the fast-darkening sky.

"Why, after all, there is some room in here," exclaimed Allison.

"Ha!" replied the sailor. "Some room? With the shallows, and Panghi Island close aboard, it is likely; and every sea a trap! Some room! There is more in the Yellow Sea, to the north'ard!"

"The other fellow is in the same case," remarked Wentworth, indicating the yacht astern with a gesture.

"And the *Neried* is tumbling about, too, sir, somewhere, and I wouldn't wonder," replied McGreal to this. "We are as safe to ride anything out as that old tub, anyhow!"

"It will be a typhoon, then, you think?" asked Allison.

"No less than that, sir! Do you note how the yacht talks to the seas as she goes on? Ships know, sir!"

"Why, then," said Wentworth, "wouldn't it be better to make for some port? The map seems dotted with harbours hereabouts."

"No time, sir," answered McGreal. "This *Lurline* is good for not more than ten knots on the screw, I should say, take her at her best. That storm down there is rushing up behind us at the rate of not less than sixty—and it may be coming faster."

"Better turn and face it, then," said Allison.

"Ten against sixty!" exclaimed McGreal, with a short laugh. "We will run as far north as we can at speed, sir; and then even we must trust to the wind to drive us into the open sea before we get the full force of it. If it strikes us with its extreme fury at the first, why, then we must hang on tight to the coat tails of Providence, and avoid every green sea that seems like to poop her! That's all we can do, sir."

As he spoke there came, feeling its way across the sea from the southward, a long, breaking sob of wind that was like a catch of breath from the hot depths

of hell. And it died away as it came, rippling the dark face of the sea as though the touch of it had made the water boil.

Then McGreal leaped to the break of the poop. For the first time in that cruise he had caught from its rack in the cabin companionway the silver trumpet that went with the master's office.

"Forrard there!" he cried. "Mr. Andressen! Get the fore and main on her! Break out the jibs! Let us get all we can out of the wind while it is just feeling its way, like."

"Aye, aye, sir," came the reply; and the men leaped to the falls and ran the sails up, only to have them slat over and over, banging the booms about to the creaking of the blocks, and actually, for the moment, making her lose way on the roll.

But it was only for that instant. Out of the south once more came the sob of the hot wind, longer than before. The *Lurline* was ready, and it caught her sails and drove her through the water hissing. Then the gusts came fast and faster, while the black clouds rolled clear away across the heavens, and darkness was on all the deep. Great waves rushed on before the wind, rolling high and higher. The sails, holding a good full, strained at their braces, and the taut ropes sang of storm and wreck, and of that underworld where fishes sport over white bones in deep sea caves.

Allison and Wentworth held the deck of the *Lurline* while the wind increased to a steady gale,

but they had called the cabin steward to put their steamer chairs below. The two friends stood, each holding by a stanchion, to look upon the waves that ran by in the darkness with an angrier hissing each moment, breaking into little flashes of pale-green flame where their crests were caught and scattered by the wind. At rare intervals they caught glimpses, far astern, of dancing lights which they knew to be on board the *Petrel*. But the lights seemed to bear away, more and more, toward the eastward. And, at last, they could be seen no more. The *Lurline* might have been alone upon that storm-tossed sea.

CHAPTER XX

A LURID LIGHT UPON THE SEA

EVEN as the lights of the other yacht vanished, Captain McGreal put the silver trumpet to his lips and shouted another order:

"Forrard there! Mr. Andressen!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came back, very faintly.

"Get the sails off her!" And at the same moment the captain rang the engineer's bell for half speed.

The sails came down with a run, were sheeted home, and the booms made fast inboard. McGreal made his way back to where Allison and Wentworth stood close together. The wind was a full gale, and as the angry seas rose behind the yacht each one seemed to threaten to engulf her in a streaming body of green fire. But the *Lurline*, with the way on her that was just safe to carry, rode among them like a storm bird that shakes the wave crests from its tail. And the seas fell back behind her with a hollow gurgle into the dark and hungry cavities of the deep.

"She handles beautifully, sir," said the captain, coming up to where the two friends stood close beside the man at the wheel. He almost screamed to make himself heard above the roaring of the tempest: "She handles beautifully!"

"Aye! She is worth all that she cost," shouted Allison, in reply.

"If we can hold her so, sir, with just this way upon her, she will ride it out!" cried McGreal.

"If it comes on to blow no harder!" shrieked Wentworth.

McGreal shook his head at that. And then, as if to change the subject: "That fellow behind is gone!" he yelled. "Maybe he wants to try for Changwa! The lee of the point in there would give some protection, and I wouldn't wonder!"

"Could we make it?" cried Allison.

"I'll keep to the open!" shouted McGreal, to that. "It is bad holding ground anywhere inside here, and hard to get in without a pilot. As long as this holds as it is, we'll do."

"But I think it is getting worse!" yelled Allison.

"Worse? Of course. But, at that, it is better than failing to make around the point, or dragging on a lee shore. God help him if he does not give himself plenty of room as he runs in!"

The captain was turning away when he caught these words from Wentworth, "And God help the women!"

"The women? I believe you! God have mercy on all women at sea in a typhoon!"

For the gale had become a typhoon. There was no longer any doubt of that. No other wind that blows across the globe could have been strong enough to raise those sullen, angry seas, rushing on like ranges

of mountains in swift motion, and roaring as they ran. No other wind could have held in its belly so much of shrieking and wailing as of lost souls; no other wind could have made men in a stanch ship cling to ropes and stanchions as for their lives; whipping them, as they clung, with a thousand furious lashes; stinging their faces and hands with the cutting edges of blown water drops that pierced like little knives, driving them to shelter in any nook of cover that offered even the slightest protection.

Wentworth, as the fury of the wind beat upon him, sent up a prayer to his God for the safety of the woman that he loved, abroad on the sea somewhere in that storm, sent up a prayer because he loved her although in his heart he was not sure whether she loved or hated him. It was all that he could do for her. And no more could any man have done amidst that elemental fury. For a man is very helpless in a storm at sea.

The *Lurline*, stripped bare, her engines working at half speed, and, at that, with her screw racing madly more than half the time, was in the storm's grasp. She had not the power to lie to and face it; and any attempt to get canvas on her would have been an invitation to disaster. The men in her could do no more. They must even let her drive as she would, and pray that she might be driven into the open sea to the northward, where lay their surest warrant of safety.

Both Allison and Wentworth, grasping stanchions

aft that had held up the cabin awning, stood close beside the steersman in awed wonder at the running of the wind and the waves. They stood there, unconscious of the passage of the time, with no thought of weariness, for hours. The whole black darkness of the wide world was about them. They could scarcely make out each other's forms as they stood, save when a luminous wave, greater than the rest, arose and ran behind them for a moment, threatening, as it mounted high and higher, to fall upon the yacht's deck.

It was by one of these pale flashes from the sea that Wentworth noted the steward, Di Sousa. The man stood on deck, pallid with fear, clinging to a stanchion as a dying man clings to his last hope of life. Wentworth could see that his face, ghastly green in that weird light, was working strangely; that his lips moved, trembling, as one who says prayers for the dying when the hand of the White Terror reaches out to grip his own heart.

And then, with a quick revulsion, Wentworth smiled, even in the face of the man's terror, and amidst that appalling commotion of wind and sea. For he could see that Di Sousa had loosened the tether of his red game cock and now held the bird fast under one arm even while the grim terror for his own life held him.

Out of the darkness forward, at that instant, the captain came staggering, clinging to the rail for support.

"We can do no more, sir!" he screamed, close to Wentworth's ear. "Pray that the engine does not buck!"

Then, in a second afterward: "God Almighty!" he shrieked, in a voice audible even above the roaring of the typhoon. "God Almighty! What is that?"

Close astern of the yacht at that moment, almost, as if it came to devour the *Lurline*, a great sheet of flame leaped out of the black depths of the sea.

CHAPTER XXI

THE STEAMER ON FIRE

INSTANTLY, the *Lurline* was set in the centre of a sea whose great waves came leaping onward in running flame, to die away, as flame dies into black cinders, in the wild darkness ahead. The clouds, plunging through the upper spaces, close down, flung their changing shapes into the picture, glowed for a moment in the baleful light, and then hurried on to be swallowed in the shadows. The whole fearful night was driving ahead with the yacht, that sped on through the hissing seas. And the fire pursued the night, and seemed to gain upon it.

One point, dead astern, gleamed bright and brighter as the flame came on across the water. On the deck of the *Lurline* every living man watched with pallid face for the thing all knew would burst out from that bright spot, watched and dreaded the coming of what was sure to come. The Malay boy, standing bare-headed at the wheel, his long hair streaming about his face, holding the *Lurline* as only a skilled seaman could among the low valleys of the tremendous waves that each instant arose and threatened to beat her down, cast more than one glance astern to where the centre of that weird fire glowed.

Wentworth, looking about him at the little group gathered on the after deck, Allison, McGreal, Di Sousa with the chicken under his arm, the man at the wheel, noted that each stood with white terror on his face, with mouth half open, like men who strain their bodies to the point of physical exhaustion, and pant for breath. Forward, where every bolt and rope and pulley in the *Lurline's* rigging was marked out plainly, the men on deck had caught the same expression; so they stood, fixed, in the attitude in which the light of the fire had found them. One who had lashed himself face down along the main boom, in fear that some sea more mountainous than the rest would sweep him overboard, had lifted his head and now stared astern with open mouth and protruding eyes. He looked as a turtle might to which something inexpressibly surprising had happened.

Wentworth, glancing hastily at Allison after one look at this man, saw the answering smile that told him the same absurd notion had crossed the mind of his friend in the thick of that tragic moment, and yet Wentworth had never for one instant lost consciousness of that baleful fire which came rushing on across the sea; nor lost one jot of the terror that swept his soul as the flames came nearer. He had caught Allison's smile, the manner and expression of the lashed sailor, merely as in a flash. He was, and knew himself to be, a component part of the same picture. Allison's whimsical smile, answering to his own, was as fleeting as the rest. The realities

of that night were the storm, and the darkness, and the wild flame that had leaped out of the sea.

Then from the very middle of the brightness astern broke a shower of sparks and there could be seen, for a moment, billows of fiery smoke that rolled upward to be swept along swiftly with the flying clouds. And a black spot came out of the sea which shaped itself, almost instantly, as a great ship rushing toward the *Lurline* sending before it as it came red banners of flame that streamed far across the waves.

It was God's power of destruction sent down swiftly on the work of men. The terror that had struck to the souls of those on the *Lurline* when they first saw that awful light upon the sea had been so deep that it had deprived them of the power of speech. With the actual coming of the ship into the picture there grew out of their terror a human pity for those other men in peril on the deep. The parted lips closed, and in more than one pair of eyes there came a sudden dimness through which the fearful fire burned faintly.

But with pity came back the power of speech, and those who looked on God's artistry in that awful picture were moved in speech only by the sentiments of their poor humanity. With a long, shuddering catch of his breath, Captain McGreal turned to Allison and Wentworth, voicing the obvious, as a man will in his times of deepest feeling.

"A steamer on fire!" he shouted. "She is driving

down before the storm and the sea with her engines at full speed."

"And we can do nothing to help!" cried Wentworth. "My God, is there no way?"

"No way!" repeated McGreal. It sounded like a mocking echo in the storm wind.

"No boat could live in this sea," Allison said, as if to bear the others out, explaining to them all their own failure to take action.

The burning steamer came on, fast and faster. She was dead astern of the *Lurline*. Those on the deck of the yacht could feel the wind from her burning hull, ten times hotter than the typhoon's breath, sweeping in scorching gusts ahead of her. Driven by the gale and the sea, driving at the same time with all the power that her makers had given her, it seemed for a little time as though she would run the yacht down bodily. Sparks and cinders fell all about the little group on the poop deck of the *Lurline*, and rained a scattering shower forward. Even above the roaring of the wind and the clamouring of the waters there came a sharp hissing as the burning particles struck the surface of the waves.

Once there was heard a sharp, unearthly squawk, and the muttered word, "*Carramba!*"

The steward, Di Sousa, could be seen in the glare to beat down and beat out on the yacht's deck a living coal that had scorched the feathers and burned the flesh of the red game cock which he still held tightly clasped under one arm.

It may have been that the smell of the burning feathers checked in more than one of the little group who watched a momentary hysterical desire to laugh.

Still, out of the red flame that covered all the sea and sky astern of the *Lurline*, the burning steamer rushed on into the darkness that loomed ahead. It was seen, after the first thrilling moment when it had been feared that she would run the yacht down, that her course would carry her a little ahead and across the bows of the smaller craft. It was the last good fortune. Neither vessel, in that wind and sea, could have changed by one hair's breadth the direction in which she was hurried.

The burning steamer, driving on with a swiftness almost past belief, came down and passed the *Lurline* not more than forty feet away. As she passed, those on the deck of the yacht caught a glimpse of two men on the bridge of her, forward of the wheelhouse, with great waves of flame sweeping, as it seemed, right out from under their feet, to stream far ahead and break over the sea in a rain of fiery sparks. They saw that these two men, muffled in storm coats, stood looking ahead, stiff and stolid, like soldiers, on parade, making not the least gesture as the doomed vessel rushed forward.

A momentary backward eddy of smoke hid from the watchers the name of the steamer, painted along the side of the wheelhouse, but they caught the passing picture of the tense, white face of the man at

the wheel through the open window, seen in a frame of whirling vapour. And there was a long row of the faces of men lining the low rail of the vessel amidships in the semi-darkness abaft the blaze. They leaned along the rail, pale, motionless, with a set rigidity of feature.

One of them held a short pipe between his teeth, although there were none of the lip motions of the smoker to be seen. And their faces were like the faces of a row of the dead in a picture.

And then, on a coil of heavy rope at the very stern of her, farthest away from the fire, a small boy sat, alone—and raised his face to look down with a speechless appeal for pity from the men on the deck of the yacht as the burning ship swept along. He had been weeping. The men on the *Lurline* could see so much, even in the shadow that half covered him. And that mercy of facile expression that is given to a child prompted him to hold out his feeble hands and, as he was swept onward with the rush of the burning steamer, to wave one gesture as of a last farewell. Then he dropped his face once more.

So the bits in the fire picture shifted, and the gaze of the *Lurline's* crew must be set forward now to follow the panorama. They failed, in the shadow, to make out the name on the ship's stern. But they heard, as the steamer passed them, the beating of her screw against the waters. Her double funnels vomited dense masses of smoke that were swept forward to mingle with the smoke from her own burn-

ing. And she was driving with the storm and being driven by her own engines—whither?

They watched her while the light that she threw ahead on sea and sky seemed opening for her a path into hell through the storm's darkness. And then McGreal turned to the two friends who stood close together on the yacht's deck in that time of tragedy. He raised the silver speaking trumpet to his lips as a man who performs some solemn right associated with the dead.

"That was the *Neried!*" he shouted.

CHAPTER XXII

INTO THE DARKNESS

WENTWORTH, grasping the awning stanchion by which he had held on during the fury of the storm, still grasping it during the time that the burning ship was hurried by, all but fainted at the words. But Allison turned on McGreal savagely.

"You lie!" he screamed. "You did not see the name!"

"I know the ship, sir." McGreal said no more than that.

The *Neried!* Then one of those men on her bridge had been Captain Graeme! And the other? Wentworth felt a wild desire to laugh, and knew that madness lay beyond that. The other man must have been his father—or the Englishman? The *Neried!* And she was on fire, and driving fast to her doom before the fury of the tempest! Hope, then, was dead. What did it all matter, now? His father gone! The yacht that he believed held the woman that he loved carried away in the storm! Disgrace, love, sorrow, his own honour, and his father's good name—all would be swallowed up in the catastrophe that was hastening to its conclusion; that was all but

at hand. For the men on that burning ship there could be no salvation in this world! For those who still fronted the typhoon in a frail yacht perhaps as little hope. It was all a transitory part of the weak futility of human endeavour.

And then anger succeeded despair, and he leaped away from the supporting stanchion, forgetting the unstable and dangerous footing afforded by the heaving deck, to confront McGreal. More by instinct than because of any conscious desire to save himself, he caught, as he leaped, at the after rail of the vessel.

"Follow her!" he yelled, shaking his fist in the face of the sailing master. "Follow that burning ship! Damn you, I tell you, follow her!"

The sailor looked at him, a deep pity in his eyes. It was remarkable, although not remarked, that all through the trying scenes which the flames from the burning steamer illuminated on the deck of the *Lurline*, McGreal lost neither his head nor his temper. And yet the terror grasped him, as it grasped the others.

"We are following her very swiftly, sir," he said, at last. "The wind and the seas and our own power drive us fast on the same course."

"Where?" shrieked Wentworth. He was mad, for the moment, with the passion that swayed him.

"God knows, sir! I pray that it may not be somewhere on the rocky shores of Formosa."

Still, far ahead, the glare from the burning ship lit up the sky, and her masts and spars and hull could

be seen marked out black against the flames as she swept on, fast followed by the fiery seas. And the *Lurline* followed likewise, although the steamer gained. The powerful engines of the *Neried*, kept at full speed for very desperation, had the greater driving power, and her larger hull gave sea and wind more surface for their play. But to those who watched from the *Lurline* it seemed that a rope of glowing flame was drawing the larger vessel fast and faster away from them. The yacht held after the red glare in sea and sky, but it grew fainter.

And then, suddenly, with one great leap of flame almost to the zenith, it flickered and went out, as the flame leaves a candle extinguished by the wind. For several minutes the glare of the fire, as seen from the yacht, had been perceptibly lessening. That was the natural effect of the burning ship running away fast across the sea. But this sudden quenching of the fire was no natural part of any such running. It was, rather, as if some monster wave had whelmed the steamer, a startling thing, leaving in the eyes of those who watched a momentary sensation of pain.

For a little time no one in the group on the after deck of the *Lurline* made any movement or remark. They stood staring into the darkness, where the light had vanished. And then Allison, with some effort, struggled across the deck to where McGreal and Wentworth stood close together. The heads of all three were bared to the storm.

"God rest them," Allison heard McGreal say, in a hoarse voice.

For a few minutes the three men clung, close together, to the after rail. It may have been that, with the passing of the danger that had beset the steamer's people into a catastrophe, a sense of their own imminent peril settled back upon those of the *Lurline*. The three men remained for a long time silent, clinging morally to the mere fact of each other's presence.

Allison was the first to speak, after that brief prayer from the lips of the sailor. He put his hands to his mouth, after the manner of a speaking trumpet, sending his voice thus more surely to the ears of the other two.

"It is the end," he said.

"It is the end," replied Wentworth, and the shudder that swept through his heart was in the shaking voice with which he echoed the words.

McGreal stood silent. His head was bent forward. He was in the attitude of one listening. But the words of the others had passed him. Whatever it was that he hearkened for was at a great distance —and he seemed fearful of what he heard. White fear, indeed, was in his face, a deeper fear than either of these two men, his companions, had seen there yet. And still he listened, and seemed to try and to dread, at once, to catch some sound that would separate itself and be distinctly apart in the night from the voices of the storm wind and the storm-tossed sea.

He caught the sound, at last, and there was contagion in it, for every soul aboard the *Lurline* heard it in the next second. It was a deep, sullen roaring, falling at intervals into the storm's clamour, as the booming of great guns in a distant battle will make itself heard across the lighter and sharper rattle of the volley firing. And there came a hail from the lookout forward, heard but indistinctly, and McGreal pointed ahead into the darkness to where a long, irregular, changing line of white ran right away across the inky surface of the sea in the yacht's path. He shouted, as he pointed, one word: "Breakers!"

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MENACE OF THE SEA—AND SAFETY

INSTINCTIVELY, as he pointed, McGreal leaped forward to touch the bell on the poop rail and signal to the engineer to stop. But he did not give the signal. The thought came to him that, driven on before the sea and the storm, the yacht could not change her course to avoid the danger ahead save at the cost of instant destruction. To have stopped the engine, and so destroyed the measure of control the men in her still held over her movements, would have caused her inevitably to roll over and swamp in the seas. And she must even drive on as she was going.

Near the breakers came and nearer. Their sullen booming, in a moment, seemed to fall upon and drown the whole wild clamour of the night. The long white line, tinged with pale-green flame, defined itself in the darkness as a seething mass of troubled water rising to heights that seemed mountainous. Stretching away on either side as far as a man might see, there was no end to it, nor any visible break in the line. And peer as they would into the blackness beyond, those on the *Lurline* could detect no loom of shore behind the breakers.

And each man stood—waiting! It was as though each felt resting on him the touch of death, and would face the destroyer with the courage of quick manhood strung to tension. There could be no escape! In the hands of a power greater than human they were borne onward swiftly to their destruction. It was a part of the sublime sarcasm which is enwrapped about the destinies of men that while they were thus carried forward swiftly to their doom by the restless invisible, the feeble throbbing of the yacht's own engine beat steadily to help them along the appointed way.

The steersman, straining with all his muscular might to ease the yacht among the running seas, as by an instinct continued to perform the duty laid on him. The little group on the after deck, silent, expectant, watchful, noted this. They might have caught inspiration from the mere mechanics of it. Wentworth, at last, reached out his right hand—and it met the right hand of Allison. The Eurasian, Di Sousa, smoothed the feathers on the head and neck of his red game cock, and soothed it with a low, affectionate crooning in Portuguese.

McGreal still stood at the break of the poop, where he had leaped to touch the engine bell, shading his eyes, straining them forward into the darkness beyond the breakers. He waited, as they all did, for the crash that would tell him that the *Lurline* had found her grave. But, like a true sailor, he still sought a

way to safety while relentless danger seemed closing every avenue against him.

The yacht rushed on. Almost, it seemed, the white line of the phosphorescent surf was under her forefoot. They could see the foam running backward as the great waves broke, spreading a fiery pattern as of hell's carpet over the black surface of the sea. And still rushing out of the darkness behind them the tremendous seas drove the *Lurline* on; and the wind was the spur of the powers of the upper air. It seemed as if the demons of the under sea and of the gale, holding the yacht in their grasp, shook her in the madness of their wicked glee, with such tremendous ferocity did the wind and the waves tear at her; hurl her forward; raise her aloft; beat her down, down in smothers of white foam.

And now they were so close to the line of breakers that any one might catch and toss their frail vessel into that seething white cauldron that set a boundary to their lives.

And then! So quickly did the change come that the extremity of peril was met and passed before either Wentworth or Allison realized that death had swooped, and missed the stroke. It was only McGreal, who leaped backward from the poop rail, put his silver trumpet to his lips and bawled an order almost into the ear of the man at the wheel.

"Port!" he yelled.

The yacht, rushing on through the water, trembled, but answered to the touch. Her sheer side just

shaved the jagged point of a rock a running wave revealed—and hid. Then the little vessel was caught on the very crest of the next great wave and carried forward at the dizzy speed of a racing motor in full career.

"Starboard!" yelled McGreal, dancing up and down in his excitement. "Hard-a-starboard! Hold her! Port! Now, let her go off!"

He jumped to the poop rail once more, and gave the engineer the jingle bell. The *Lurline* seemed to tear through the fiery green-white foam in a series of desperate leaps, and ran into still, dark water where only moderate seas followed her and drove on fast before the sweep of the rushing wind. The tremendous uproar of the breakers was all astern.

The captain tapped the bell again for half speed, and, in an easy sea, the *Lurline* went forward, just feeling her way. But the white line of the reef was behind her, and the fiery pattern of phosphorescent carpet grew fainter in its changing lines as it receded.

"Forrard there!" cried McGreal, paying no further heed to danger past.

"Aye, aye, sir!" came a voice out of the darkness on the main deck.

"Is that you, Mr. Andressen?"

"Yes, sir."

"Get out the sounding lead, there!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

In the next moment the voice of the leadsman was floating out into the night as he threw the line, and

the words were taken up by the strong voice of the mate, and so carried backward to the group on the after deck.

"N-o-o-o bottom!"

"No bottom, sir."

"Fifteen fathom!"

"Fifteen fathom, sir."

"Sca-a-ant twelve!"

"Scant twelve, sir."

"Six fathom!"

"Six it is, sir."

"Five fathom! Easy five, and shoaling, sir!"

"Forrard there!" yelled the captain at that, without waiting for the mate's voice, and touching the bell at the same time to stop the engine. "Get out that port anchor, Mr. Andressen! Lively, now!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The chugging of the exhaust ceased. There was a sharp rattling of chains. And the *Lurline*, in the next moment, swung around by the port side and came easily to a stop with the full sweep of the wind hitting her in the nose. But the gale had lost much of the force that it had outside; she was in shoal water, with a sand bottom, and the sea was running down.

"Get the starboard anchor over, Mr. Andressen!" cried the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir."

Again the chains rattled out. The second mud hook caught. And the *Lurline* was as safe as a church.

"She will do, now," said McGreal, coming aft to where Wentworth and Allison still stood, their right hands clasped. Only at that moment did they break the clasp, with some slight feeling of shame it might have been, and stand apart.

"By God!" the captain said, as he came up, "that was a close call, all right!"

"There did not seem to be a lot to spare!" replied Allison.

He reached out and shook hands with the captain as he spoke, and Wentworth did the same thing immediately afterward. Those three men had just passed, together, through the only break in the line that death had laid down in their path. Out of the storm and the sea and the darkness the *Lurline* had come, straight as the arrow flies, to the one breach in the reef through which a vessel could have passed. No power below God's Providence had guided her in the time of danger. Wentworth, after the handshake, turned to the Eurasian steward.

"Go below and make us a cocktail!" he said.

So men cover the stirring of the primal emotions with outward manifestation of the commonplace. After that no one spoke for a little. Then Allison asked: "Where are we?"

"God only knows!" replied McGreal. "And He won't tell till daylight—after which, He won't have to. But I should say we were somewhere close in to the foreshore of the Island of Formosa. We may be half a mile from land, and we may be ten miles."

"We are inside the reef?" queried Allison.

"We are in the lee of it, anyhow," said the captain, "and in some kind of shelter. There's a vessel's riding light off the port bow there. We must have just missed running her down."

The two friends looked in the direction indicated and, sure enough, a light was dancing there at a little distance as the seas rose and fell. It must have been, as McGreal said, that the *Lurline* passed her close as she came rushing in to safety. Other men had been in peril on their account.

The mate, Mr. Andressen, came on the poop deck at the moment and saluted. "I have sent the watch below to turn in, sir," he said. "There won't be much doing here till morning."

"That is right," answered the captain. "Where do you make out we are, Mr. Andressen? You would be more used to these seas."

"I can't rightly say, sir. But there's a reef like that runs out from Tali Point. I have seen the breakers on it, passing close in here on the P. & O. boats."

"That is on Formosa?"

"Yes, sir."

"We are safe to ride here till morning, then?" queried the captain.

"She is riding easily enough now, with both hooks holding," replied the mate. "And the wind is blowing itself out."

"I note that. We seem to have found port in a storm."

"It can't be much of a port, sir, at that. And it won't be safe to get too close inshore. The natives are a pretty savage lot hereabouts."

"Japs haven't got 'em tamed yet, eh?" asked Wentworth.

"Why, sir," replied the mate, "the Japs hold the towns, and the camphor camps close in fast enough. There would be a garrison in Tali, it is likely. But five miles outside the town a man would not be safe. And anywhere alongshore between military posts there is danger. The native pirates are as like as not to come swooping offshore in their sampans if a vessel gets too close in and falls into stays."

"Well, we could run out with our engine," said Allison.

"True enough, sir," agreed the mate, "but I'd not want my life to hang on the working of a petrol engine. The natives are not likely to come off in this wind."

He turned, as he spoke, to go below, and McGreal addressed Allison and Wentworth:

"I would advise you gentlemen to get some sleep, too," he said, holding his watch to the binnacle light to note the time. "It is past midnight, and we can't do a thing until day breaks and we find out where we are. I will stand watch, and guard the ship."

"You will ride here until morning, of course?" queried Allison.

"Sure!" answered McGreal. "There isn't any-

thing else to do. The wind is dying, and the sea begins to run down, but we would not dare venture that reef in the dark. It will be like a mill pond here by sunrise."

When Wentworth and Allison went below they found Di Sousa standing beside the cabin table with two cocktails mixed ready for them. They drank, clinking glasses, and each turned toward his own cabin.

"I suppose," said Wentworth, looking back toward the steward as he opened his own door, "that the game cock is safe, Di Sousa?"

"Sar!" replied the Eurasian, bowing most profoundly, and with a gratified smile, "She is!"

Wentworth and Allison were called, by the captain's order, at sunrise. It was a clear, warm, beautiful morning, with not a cloud, and only the breath of a gentle south wind coming in from the seaward. The two friends came on deck in pajamas and their Japanese bath slippers.

The *Lurline*, not half a mile from the curving white beach, along which a little ripple of surf rose and fell gently, lay at anchor before a village of reddish-brown thatched huts standing like a stage village against the brilliant green of a heavily forested mountain range.

From a tall, white staff in the middle foreground the sun flag of Japan blazed in the morning sunshine, stealing down across the tops of the camphor trees on the slopes to tip their new leaves with crimson,

and a trig little Japanese sentry walked up and down on the beach in front of two shining field pieces set there with their black mouths toward the sea. Now and again a native with tousled black hair would peer out from one of the huts, and farther back, toward the forest line, Wentworth and Allison could see woodmen, shining axes over their shoulders, making their way in straggling order up the first slopes of the hills—the camphor tree cutters of Formosa.

The tide had turned to go out in the night, and the *Lurline* lay with her bow toward the shore, the whole white line of the reef showing astern of her. The waves were breaking upon the rocks, but not with the force that had characterized them during the typhoon, and the dark gap through which the yacht had run in to safety during the night showed plainly.

The two friends bade Captain McGreal good morning, and turned to take in the points of the picture. It was all very beautiful: the little sheltered bay; the curving shoreline, running around to a densely wooded point on either hand; the vivid green of the camphor forests on the hills showing reddish tints on the leaves where the tender new shoots were springing. And riding not one hundred yards away, on the starboard quarter, they saw a trim green yacht at anchor.

"The *Petrel!*" said McGreal, in answer to the startled look both gave him at the same moment. "I suppose her captain knew this place, and ran

for shelter before the wind came on to blow too hard."

Then, in a moment, those on the *Lurline* noted a movement among the seamen on the green yacht. They had, up to that time, been hanging over the rail of her, idly looking at the vessel which had been swept into the haven on the wings of the storm. Her captain had come on deck, and given an order which was followed by a boatswain's whistle that sent half a dozen men scuttling down the port gangway of her and into the yawl which swung idly in the water there. The captain himself had followed directly after them, and had taken his place at the tiller of the small boat.

"She is sending a boat to board us," said Captain McGreal.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN ARTIST IN COCKTAILS

PROPELLED by six oars, the yawl came through the still water very swiftly. Almost, as it seemed, in a moment after leaving the side of the *Petrel* it was passing around by the stern of the *Lurline*.

"Forrard there!" cried McGreal. "Get that port gangway down! Lively, now!"

The sailors leaped to obey, just as a hail came from the man in the stern of the yawl.

"*Lurline*, ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" replied McGreal, man-of-war fashion.

"I want to come aboard you, sir!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

It was all very ship-shape and proper. With that answering shout from McGreal as a signal the yawl shot alongside and the captain of the *Petrel* leaped lightly to the platform and ran up the gangway. He touched his cap to Captain McGreal as he stepped on deck, and the two shook hands.

"Good morning, Captain McGreal!" the stranger said.

"Very glad to see you, sir," answered McGreal, "although you have a little the best of me."

"Ah!" replied the stranger, smiling. "I cleared from Manila after you, you see. I am Captain Stoddard, sir, sailing master of the *Petrel*."

Wentworth and Allison had come down over the break of the poop, and McGreal introduced them in due form.

"I am come aboard to congratulate you on your escape out of the typhoon," said Captain Stoddard.

"It was a close call," murmured McGreal.

"Aye, sir, it was that. And I want to invite you gentlemen to breakfast on board the *Petrel*," went on Captain Stoddard. "You must be weary, after the night of stress, and may be willing to let your fellows try to cheer you up a bit. I thought you had been safe to pass the Channel and run out into the open sea when we saw you come in last night. You just missed running us down by a hair, sir; and you came so suddenly that I had no time to burn a flare. It was a wonder of seamanship that you made the passage of the reef in that gale."

"It was the hand of God!" replied McGreal, lifting his cap as he spoke.

"Ha!" exclaimed the visitor. "The burning steamer was in the devil's hands, likely, when she tried the passage. She struck, with a crash, a mile below the opening—and winked out."

"That was the *Neried*," said McGreal.

"The *Neried!*" repeated Captain Stoddard, and then, slowly, as if to himself: "The *Neried!* It is ended, then?"

He recovered from the surprise that had made him forget his part for a moment, it might have been, and addressed himself again to McGreal: "But you must have known the passage, sir?"

"Neither reef nor passage. I was never here in my life," replied the sailing master of the *Lurline*.

"By God! Then, it was the hand of a Higher Power!" exclaimed Captain Stoddard. "This Formosa coast is treacherous. I know every inch of it. But you will come and breakfast aboard?"

"With pleasure," replied McGreal.

"And these gentlemen?" continued Captain Stoddard. "The ladies sent me with the invitation."

He had turned toward the gangway as he spoke.

"The ladies!" exclaimed Allison. "None of us would disappoint the ladies. We will come across as soon as we can dress."

"But will you not come into the cabin before going over the side, Captain Stoddard?" asked Wentworth.

"By all means," urged Allison. "We have no ladies on board, but we have the sailor's next attraction. There is a very special whisky in her stores and the steward makes a cocktail calculated to make a man weep from the memory of it."

"I'll tell you," replied Captain Stoddard, turning back as he spoke, "the fine art of making cocktails is one that has never lacked a patron in me."

At that McGreal waved him to take the lead up the companionway running up over the break of the

poop. The visitor was thus first on the *Lurline's* quarterdeck, and led the way into her cabin. So it fell out that neither of his three hosts saw his expression change, nor noted the start he gave when he caught sight of the steward, Di Sousa, standing at the head of the cabin table, nor did either notice the momentary hesitancy of his step as he put his foot into the cabin. And, if they had been noticed, the start and the hesitation would have been ascribed naturally to the sudden coming into a strange place.

If the appearance of Stoddard there had any effect on Di Sousa, the steward had better command of himself and did not show it. It seemed to Wentworth and Allison, indeed, that the Eurasian excelled himself in the mixture that he achieved that morning. And it may have been that the agitation of Captain Stoddard found the safety valve of an outlet in the remark with which he set down his glass after draining it.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it is the most seductive that I ever tasted!"

He drank another on invitation, but would have no more. "It would not be safe," he said. "After three of them a man might go home and steal his own chronometer."

Moreover, he spoke of his duty to return to the ladies with an acceptance of their invitation to breakfast.

"Speaking of the ladies, Captain Stoddard," said Allison, "will you give them our apologies for remiss-

ness for failing to call while we were in Manila? We were greatly hurried, and we were not aware, until we got well up into the China Sea, that the *Petrel* was Miss Graeme's yacht."

It was a shot with a purpose, and it went home. Captain Stoddard started, and lost countenance. Then he got his face back, laughing a little.

"You know the *Petrel* is Miss Graeme's yacht?" he exclaimed. "That was intended to be a surprise."

"We saw Miss Graeme and Mrs. Penworthy on the deck of her after you put to sea," replied Allison. "We will be very glad to get a nearer view of them. The ladies are old friends of ours."

"Well," said Captain Stoddard, still smiling, "I haven't told you anything. And it may be that the ladies will still have a surprise for you on board the *Petrel!*"

"It will be pleasant, naturally," said Allison, politely.

"Being in the hands of the ladies," agreed McGreal, with the gallantry of a true sailor.

Captain Stoddard smiled, and bowed. "I must leave you, gentlemen," he said, leading the way to the deck. And the next moment he turned to shake hands at the head of the yacht's gangway, at the foot of which his yawl rode lazily.

"I want to know," he said to McGreal in a low tone, almost at the moment of leaving, "whether that chap has his red game cock with him?"

"Di Sousa? Why, yes," replied the sailing master

of the *Lurline*. And then, gathering that the question was a rather peculiar one, he asked in his turn: "Why do you want to know?"

But Captain Stoddard had run down the gangway, and leaped lightly into his yawl. To himself, as he took the tiller ropes and ordered the men to give way, he muttered: "I'll fix that damned spy, anyhow!"

CHAPTER XXV

ON BOARD THE GREEN YACHT

CAPTAIN STODDARD left the people on the *Lurline* in a very considerable flutter. Although neither Allison nor Wentworth had heard his last question, each had enough from the visit to ripple his placidity, and McGreal, who was puzzling himself principally over the matter of the game cock, had no light upon it. And in the bustle of preparation for the breakfast he would have no time to question Di Sousa. Also, there was left by Stoddard's manner something of a doubt in the captain's mind which would have made him chary of speaking to his steward.

"What do you know about that?" asked Wentworth of Allison, as they turned to go down into the cabin for their bath and to dress.

"Yachting courtesy, maybe!" laughed Allison.

"Rot!"

"That's what it would be, under ordinary circumstances," agreed Allison. "In this case, it may have the added touch of a pretty woman's desire to be agreeable to people she likes."

"It is a great deal more," insisted Wentworth. "Why should she follow us to disclose herself here,

when she could have done that so much more easily at Manila?"

"My dear boy," said Allison, "being at this writing of sound and disposing mind, I tell you, with all solemnity and earnestness, that when it comes to attempting to fathom the motives of a woman, I am always and altogether out of my depth. But we did not give the lady much of a chance at Manila."

"There was chance enough, if she had wanted us to know that she was in that part of the world," insisted Wentworth.

Allison smiled, noting here an unconscious assertion of a right to criticize. "I suppose there was," he said. "And there is this supposition: She left us at sea, thought to be safe and following the *Neried.* She does not know what happened last night: whether we have lost the *Neried,* or whether we are ourselves in condition to continue the chase. And it may have occurred to her—it would be obvious to you and me—that when people are hunting the same quarry success is more apt to crown united effort made with understanding."

"It depends upon the purpose of each hunter's hunting, does it not?"

"Somewhat. But even hunters who hunt with different purposes may agree up to the time of finding."

"Anyway, the *Neried* is gone!" exclaimed Wentworth.

"Which fact is not known to the lady or will not be until Captain Stoddard tells her."

Each went to his own cabin at that, and within half an hour both were rowed with McGreal to the *Petrel* in the *Lurline's* yawl, hailed, and were received at the head of the gangway by Captain Stoddard. Margaret Graeme and her aunt, Mrs. Penworthy, waited for them on the after deck where the yacht's sailors had already spread the awning, and the breakfast was served there in the open air.

"Good morning, Miss Graeme!" said Wentworth and Allison together, removing their hats as they stepped over the break of the poop.

"Welcome on board the *Petrel!*" she said, coming forward with extended hand, to Allison first, and smiling most graciously. Very plainly Captain Stoddard had said nothing to her of the loss of the *Neried.* So the wise man spoils no breakfast but his own.

Margaret merely shook hands, as with old friends, with Allison and Wentworth. Her greeting of McGreal had something more in it, something of graciousness, something of true womanly sweetness which put the sailorman at his ease at once, awakening in his mind that sense of the superiority of the male creature a woman knows so well how to arouse. It was very cleverly done. Allison, watching her, smiled at the art of it. But it was in her manner more than in her words, for this was all that she

said: "I am very glad to meet you, Captain McGreal. We saw how you ran the *Lurline* in last night. A master of the sea rules the world, sir."

Mrs. Penworthy was a little more precise in her greeting, but it was nothing to hurt. Indeed, the slightly formal manner of the elder woman, as a foil, enabled the younger to carry off the situation better. And maybe there was art in that, too.

"Captain Stoddard tells me that you recognized us at sea," Margaret said, turning to Allison. "I think you were most impolite not to signal as much to us."

"The lady speaks first," replied Allison, laughing.

"I would know you anywhere in the world," said Wentworth in a low tone, going very close to her. And she smiled at him, saying nothing.

"Come, gentlemen," she said to the others, as the steward set a silver coffee urn on the table, "let us sit down. I have heard that all men are bears before they have broken their fast. And we are most curious to hear how you escaped the fury of that appalling storm."

She took the head of the table, motioning McGreal to the foot. And then as they sat she had Wentworth on her right hand and Allison on her left. Captain Stoddard sat next to Wentworth, and Mrs. Penworthy was beside Allison.

And it fell to Wentworth, as it seemed, naturally, although it may have been because his powers of description were the best, to tell the story of the

storm and the escape, and the thrilling incident of the burning of the *Neried*. At that, indeed, the breakfast was all forgotten, and the breakfast table became a mere ground for the play of the primal human emotions leaping out through the torn veil of the conventions.

To the three guests it was an old tale. Told at that table solemnly, and with the feeling of a man who fears that he speaks of the tragic death of his own father, who brings to a sister's heart the knowledge that her brother has been swallowed up in the uncontrollable fury of the elements, it affected those who knew the tale with a deep and quiet sadness. But to those on board the *Petrel* it was as the tearing aside of the curtain of doom, a glimpse into that abyss which waits always on the feet of men.

Wentworth, speaking in low tones, looking about him as he spoke with his own eyes dimmed, saw Margaret Graeme go white, and grasp at the top of the table as if for support. He saw Mrs. Penworthy slip down into her chair, gasping—for the first time in her life showing in public that she felt the burden of her years. He saw Captain Stoddard, who had himself said nothing of the loss of the *Neried*, half start up, as though he would have stopped the relation, and then subside into his chair, gathering understanding that the tale was on the lips of the right man to tell it.

Margaret recovered self-command first. She was

the hostess, trained to the part, and the younger of the two women.

"The *Neried* gone!" she exclaimed. And then, in a tone so low that Wentworth scarcely caught the words: "Poor Robert!"

Her eyes dropped. It seemed that, for a moment, she breathed a prayer. And then she looked, with level brow, at Wentworth.

"Our quest is at an end, John," she said.

In those few words she told him the tale of how she had followed him across the sea to help him, the one man in the world who had made to her the deep appeal of the man to her womanhood. For the moment those others at the table had no existence, for her or for Wentworth.

"It is at an end," replied Wentworth. "My father and your brother! They are gone to their account, Margaret."

It was the first time he had called her by that name, as it had been the first time she had addressed him by his.

"May God have mercy!" she said.

"Amen!" answered Wentworth.

CHAPTER XXVI

"THE NAVAL SUPPORTS ARE COMING UP"

THE shock of the disregard of the conventions by Margaret and Wentworth caused Mrs. Penworthy to gather her wits together a little. She came to the rescue of the situation at the breakfast table with a commonplace, the chaperon's instinct.

"I think, dear," she said to Margaret, in a faint voice which she yet contrived, plucky old woman that she was, to hold fairly steady, "that I will have another cup of coffee."

The look of admiration that the old lady got at that from McGreal should have repaid, and did help, her.

"The old one is a peach, by God!" muttered the sailor, under his breath. And then aloud, with something of a feeling that the diversion should be helped: "There seems to be something doing among our Japanese friends on shore!"

It completed the diversion, as a matter of fact. Every one at the breakfast table, even Margaret and Wentworth for a moment, glanced toward the village on the beach, and saw the people and the soldiers buzzing about there as bees buzz around a hive dis-

turbed. The villagers were running in and out of their huts; the soldiers were tumbling out of their quarters in the village houses and arming hastily to gather near the guns on the beach; a trumpet was sounding the alarm; and, presently, a trooper riding one shaggy pony in harness, and leading a second, galloped along the strand toward the brass field piece. He leaped to the ground as he reached the gun and, with the help of some of his fellows, hurriedly hitched the team to the piece. Meanwhile, a company of troops was hastily forming, and from the forest on the hills behind the town the camphor cutters could be seen running to the cover of the village, some throwing their axes behind them as they ran. And the next moment there came a scattering volley from the covert of the trees.

"By jove!" cried Allison, "an outbreak of the natives! And we can watch it as from a box in the theatre!"

"And take a hand in it, too," cried Captain Stoddard, leaping up from the table and stepping to the poop rail. "I want nothing better than a chance at these Formosan pirates!"

"For'ard there, Mr. Wilson!" he yelled. "Get the jacket off that gun, and hoist some ammunition from the forehold! Tumble it up lively, now!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" the reply came, as the mate bustled the men about to obey orders.

"I can supply you gentlemen with Lee-Metford rifles," said Stoddard, turning to Margaret's guests.

"They have a range of three thousand yards. That should just about put a bullet into the front of that line of trees. It may be possible to pick off a savage or two."

"If you will put me aboard the *Lurline*, Captain Stoddard," said McGreal, who had sent his yawl back to his own yacht, "I will get the jacket off her gun, and arm her men. It would be too bad not to give the pirates all the squadron has. Miss Graeme will excuse me, I am sure?"—with a bow in Margaret's direction.

"I have always wanted to see men in battle," she said, looking at him with shining eyes.

"It might be a good notion to get our hooks up and run in closer," said Allison, and Wentworth, who had risen from the table, drew nearer to the side of Margaret. Both young men had the battle light in their eyes although each held himself in strong repression.

"Good!" cried Captain Stoddard. "And we'll show our colours, too, by God! Honest flags will give the little Japs assurance of sympathy and help it may be."

They had all risen from the breakfast table now, of course. McGreal, turning to leave them, said to Allison, who was closest to him: "You two will stay with the ladies, I suppose?"

Allison, by a gesture, indicated Wentworth and Margaret, left standing together, a little apart, and McGreal, followed to the head of the gangway by

Captain Stoddard, went over the side into the *Petrel's* yawl, manned to carry him to his own vessel.

"Oh, before you go, Captain McGreal," said the sailing master of the *Petrel*, "don't tell Di Sousa I asked about his game chicken, will you?"

McGreal stopped before taking his seat in the stern of the yawl. "Why did you ask about that game cock, anyway?" he queried. "I wanted to ask you."

"Another time I will explain. I have had my eye on that chicken for some time." Then, to the men in the yawl: "Give way there, men!"

The yawl drew away, giving McGreal no chance to press the question, and Captain Stoddard went back to his own quarterdeck. He saw there, first of all Margaret and Wentworth standing apart, with clasped hands, regardless now of all that went on around them. They would have stood thus, the man and the woman, if the whole world had been there to look on.

"You followed me—because you loved me, Margaret?" Wentworth said, while Mrs. Penworthy nearly fainted, and all the bustle of the preparation for battle went on aboard the yacht. But the man and the woman were at the supreme moment.

"Yes," she said.

He took one step nearer.

"You still love me?"

"Would I be here, John?" She blushed as she said it, but she went on, bravely: "Would I have

dared to ask you on board? I followed you, because I loved you, to help you save your father from my brother. And in that I have failed."

"It was the will of God!" he said, solemnly. "You have failed in nothing else. And we have each other."

"If you will have my brother's sister?"

"Or you, my father's son?"

It may have been merely a fortunate chance that, at the moment of the meeting of their lips, Allison shouted to draw attention to a movement on shore. Or it may have been that the fortunate chance was taken advantage of. The friendship of men goes far. And it served, at all events. Even Mrs. Penworthy looked away, at the shout from the couple who were recklessly rough riding over all the fences of her chaperonage. It is a real mercy, when an elderly and precise woman can thus be spared.

This, it was, Allison had shouted:

"Look! The battle! It develops on the right!"

There, on the beach, the company of Japanese soldiers was moving around toward the low, wooded point shutting in the little harbour on the southward, and the ponies were drawing the brass field piece in the same direction. Under the whips of the officers, too, a lot of the natives of the town had taken hold by long ropes and were helping to get the gun forward, while there was a huddle of the black men moving along in straggling groups, behind the soldiers.

Captain Stoddard touched a bell, the engines of the *Petrel* began to cough, and the yacht swung

around, free of her anchors which had already been hoisted inboard, and moved along parallel with the advancing company on the beach. The captain touched Allison on the shoulder, and pointed toward the *Lurline*. The yacht, too, was gliding toward the wooded point.

"The naval supports are coming up!" said Captain Stoddard.

CHAPTER XXVII

IT IS THE "NERIED"

IT WAS, perhaps, three miles from the anchorage of the two yachts to the point. And as the *Petrel* moved slowly forward with the *Lurline* swinging in behind her, both going at half speed to keep abreast of the troops, she swung in more and more toward the shore. Both yachts had broken out their colours; and they made a pretty sight as they glided through the still waters.

Naturally, with the brass six-pounder showing on the forward deck of each, and with the men of the crew, each armed with a Lee-Metford rifle, lining the rails of the vessels on the shoreward side, the plain purpose of the yachts to take some part in the coming fight did not escape the attention of the officer in command of the Japanese troops ashore.

Within half a mile of the point the soldiers came to a halt. From beyond the point the sharp cracking of rifles indicated that the firing was heavier.

The Japanese officer in command held a short consultation with his second, and from the deck of the *Petrel* both could be seen to gesticulate with some emphasis. Then the lieutenant stepped toward the beach, unfurled a small flag, and began to wave it

backward and forward in front of his face to some measured, purposeful movement.

"Wigwag!" cried Captain Stoddard. "And he spells out the words in English!"

Then, turning to his mate, standing at his side:

"Give him the signal, Mr. Wilson! I can read his message. He wants to know our business. Tell him we go into the battle on his side, and under his orders."

In a moment more a line of bright signal flags fluttered from the mast head of the *Petrel*, and almost at the same instant the *Lurline* showed the same flags. The Japanese lieutenant fell back to his place. The company formed up and moved forward. The soldiers had accepted the naval supports.

From the decks of the yachts their people watched the unfolding of the line of the bay shore as they might have watched the unrolling of a panorama. The picture was a most beautiful one. And it had the added interest that attends upon the great moving picture of life, that at the end of the film the catastrophe would come. What scene of vivid action involving the development of this catastrophe would the turning of the point reveal?

Of all those who watched, only Wentworth and Margaret Graeme, humanly absorbed in each other, wandered in thought in the slightest from the externals of the scene in which they were also actors. He told her, as they stood together apart on the

deck of the *Petrel*, how he had followed the man he believed to be his father—although there was still a baffling doubt—across the world; and of his motive in that pursuit. And she told him how, knowing of his quest, and knowing that her own wayward brother had been in command of the *Halcyon*, she had determined to follow, too, and give her help to the man she loved. That was the woman's first purpose.

Her plan had been easy enough to carry out. She was her own mistress, the mistress of her own fortune, and there was her aunt to play propriety. When Allison sailed on the *Korea*, she went north to Vancouver and took the *Empress of India*. Sailing four days later, she had beaten him by three days into Hongkong.

When he bought the *Lurline*, she purchased the *Petrel*, which arrived in the port about the same time. Allison did not know that he was being followed, and money procured her the services of a local detective agency to keep her advised as to his movements. Captain Stoddard, an old school friend of Mrs. Penworthy but long a vagrant adventurer in the China Seas, had been found by a fortunate chance in the Hongkong Hotel and readily took command of the *Petrel*, with a commission to get her ready for sea.

It was a simple matter enough, after following the *Lurline* to Manila, to find out about Captain Graeme's orders to take command of the *Neried*, and then to

follow the *Lurline* again, knowing that her people would keep track of the tramp steamer. Margaret's point of ignorance was as to the position of her brother in the affair. It had been her purpose to be present when the steamer was overtaken, to save her brother, it might be, or her lover. And she had not meant to reveal the fact that she was in pursuit until that time. In the position of being the element unexpected, she would gain strength.

But the storm, and the *Lurline*'s unexpected arrival in the port of refuge, and her own anxiety lest something should have happened to Wentworth, led to a change in her plan in that regard. And she had revealed herself.

Little time as these mutual explanations had taken, that interval had sufficed to put the *Petrel* well up to go around the point. Naturally, the two yachts being out from the shore some hundred yards, those on board would get a glimpse into the next bight of the coast before the soldiers on the beach could see what it was that they were advancing against. And with a mighty sailor oath Captain Stoddard saw, and leaped in his excitement to point ahead.

"By the living God!" he cried. "By the living God! The *Neried!*"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BATTLE WITH THE FORMOSANS

THE words thrilled every heart on board the *Petrel*. Margaret and Wentworth, absorbed as they were in the wondrous selfishness of their love, looked away, each from the other, to that point in the common view that had suddenly become the centre of the human interest of all.

A great iron steamer, painted dull black, splotched here and there with big daubs of red, having a double funnel and two sticks and with the marks of fierce flames all about her forward hull, lay stranded on the rocks of the reef at a little distance from the shore in the shallows. The reef ran close in here, marking the entrance to a bight sheltered by high, rocky points; and terrific seas must have run in the storm just at the place where the steamer struck. Whelmed in these seas, the fire in her had been all but extinguished, but little wreaths of smoke eddying upward from the forward hatch showed where the embers in her still smouldered.

Resting on the rocks close in, she had a strong list to the port side. And from the line of trees fringing the beach, and from a hundred sampans that clustered and ran backward and forward in

the shallows between the ship and the shore, a thousand frantic, yelling Formosans were attacking her. Those on shore ran out into the still water for a little way and fired at close range from their nondescript guns, and ran back, screaming, to the cover of the trees. Those in the sampans sent their craft dashing forward to fire at will in running volleys, and sought to clamber up the high, smooth hill of her as she lay. Beaten, they fell back to gather courage for new assaults while making room for other boats.

And of those who ran out from the cover of the trees down into the water many did not come back again, but lay writhing in screaming agony, or quite stark and silent on the sand. And the deck of more than one sampan was slippery with blood which dripped down and reddened the lagoon and the line of foam on the reef where the lazy billows broke.

For the men in the steamer, although they did not fire one shot to a hundred of their assailants, yet had been so placed for the defence by a master of tactics that every shot told. Rifles blazed, now and again, from her open ports and from the shelter of her bulwarks. Two men, skilled marksmen, crouched in the forward crosstrees, and two more in the main. And the men on the deck were so changed and shifted to cover threatened points as to make the small crew, reserving fire until the shots could tell, seem on the defensive at every spot and in sufficient numbers. Indeed, it seemed that every shot from the steamer was followed by the scream of a stricken savage.

Only two men were in plain sight on the vessel. Those two, each with a rifle in his hands and a couple of revolvers belted to his sides, stood high on the half-burned bridge forward, exposed to the full fire of the Formosans. And each, from time to time, would raise his gun and pick off a savage as coolly as though it had been an affair of trapshooting.

One of the two, the heavily bearded one, Wentworth knew to be the man he sought. And if that man was not his father, surely Nature had for once cast two shapes of humanity in the same mould. Barring the long beard, the man in every line, in every motion of his body, was startlingly like Elliot Wentworth.

The other man on the bridge Margaret recognized at once. There stood and fought her lawless brother, and he seemed, with that other at his side, to bear a charmed life. Many a wild savage must have aimed his shot at the pair, aloft there, in plain view and at easy distance, directing the fighting of the ship and themselves sending red death swiftly among their foes. But neither man seemed, so far, to have been even scratched.

And just as the wonder of it came to the mind of Margaret she saw her brother's rifle—raised to draw a bead on a foeman—fly up in the air. The stricken man reeled and fell before his companion could leap to catch him. And even as the bearded one sprang to help, he, too, went down with a bullet in his forehead.

Then Captain Stoddard gave his engineer the jingle bell, and the *Petrel* dashed ahead, full speed, right into the middle of the fleet of sampans swarming about the stern of the *Neried*. Two of the frail boats of the Formosans she caught and crushed, and the *Lurline*, rushing right on behind her, added two to that.

The sampan men fled, in wild panic, for the shore, many of them leaping into the sea to their death, at the same moment that the company of Japanese soldiers doubled around the point and charged down, after one volley, firing at will as they came into the crowd of natives on the beach, who were likewise swept by a couple of shots from the brass guns of the yachts and another from the field piece of the land forces.

The men on the yachts, and one of the women, firing at will, and with precision, burned the savages as they took to their heels, breaking for the cover of the timber. Directed by McGreal, inspired by the example of Oleson and the fierce fighting energy of that white savage, Andressen, Allison's piratical mixture held stable, under the eye of the Japanese soldiery. The battle, indeed, was over in a very few minutes after the arrival of reinforcements for the men in the steamer. No savage band that ever swarms to murder will abide disciplined attack.

The Japanese soldiers burned what was left of the sampan fleet, and followed the fugitives into the forest. There was desultory shooting among the

trees for the better part of the day. But the Formosans knew their own country, and it is likely that most of them got away.

The Japanese captain, after the retreat of the savages, met Allison and Wentworth and the captains of the two yachts on the deck of the wrecked steamer, and thanked them handsomely for the help given him in routing the islanders. And then, being a Japanese and a gentleman, he desired his respects paid to the ladies, secluded with their sorrow, and sent his post surgeon to look after the two men wounded on the bridge of the *Neried*. He would hold his men at the place for several days to hunt down the savages, he said, and asked that the two yachts might remain near the *Neried* during that time.

At once on boarding the steamer Wentworth had had his wounded father carried to his own cabin on board the *Lurline*. He lay there, pale and unconscious, and Wentworth, sitting beside him, chafing his cold hands and waiting for the closed eyes to open, could doubt no longer. This man, the man who had posed as an Englishman, this fugitive with bandaged head who had fled so far to meet the bullet that, striking his skull, had yet glanced without penetrating the brain; this wreck who lay unconscious now, with all his troubles left behind in the night into which his soul was wandering, was the great banker, the public-spirited citizen, his father.

CHAPTER XXIX

"HIS NAME IS NORMAN AINSWORTH"

ROBERT GRAEME, under Captain Stoddard's direction, was taken on board the *Petrel*. In the white-and-green cabin of the yacht, on the captain's own bed, he lay dying, and knew his destiny had found him. And his old aunt, forgetting the conventions of a lifetime in the presence of the grisly end of all the conventions, knelt beside him to weep and pray.

"So this is the end, Margie," Graeme said, turning to his sister who sat on a low chair beside his bed, holding his hand. He had gone back to the baby name of her childhood at the last. He did not ask how she had come there, nor how his aunt had come; nor seem at all surprised to see them. It may be that the soul begins, a little, to cease to consider distance as it prepares to take its long flight.

Margaret, with womanly strength commanding her natural emotion, pressed the hand she held, and smoothed back the tangled hair of the dying man. The Japanese surgeon had shaken his head when he saw Graeme, and left a stimulating draught, after the dying man had refused an injection of morphine.

"I want to know my death," he said. "I have known what a man may of life.

"And so," Graeme repeated, after the surgeon had gone, "this is the end! It is well enough. The ending fits the rest."

Margaret's lips moved silently, and she smoothed his hair. It was the mother touch, and it soothed him.

"You pray for me, sister?" he said. Then, after a little pause: "It does not matter. A man's death-bed is not made harder by a good woman's prayers."

He lay silent, with closed eyes. He had been shot through the groin, and moaned from the pain of the wound. But he mastered himself with an effort. Margaret administered the stimulant left for him by the Japanese surgeon, and then, for a long time, sat silent, still smoothing his hair.

"Robert," she whispered, at last. "Robert!"

He opened his eyes at that, and looked at her, strangely.

"Did you call me, dear?" he asked.

"Who was the man with you in the *Neried?*"

"Norman Ainsworth." The answer came without the least hesitancy.

"You know him by no other name?"

"That was his name. He had no other. He called himself Norman Ainsworth, and Harran called him that, as did the lawyer, Chester."

"Mr. Harran?" she cried.

"Of course. Old Harran! You know him well enough, and so do I. He got me to go to San Fran-

cisco after Ainsworth. I was to deliver him wherever he wanted to go. He seemed only to want to go with me—to travel. He had no money, as far as I could find out, but, as I had been well paid, I let him go. I wish I hadn't, now. He might have been alive yet if he had stopped at some port. And he was a good fellow, although he was crazy in the head. That is, he was a bit absent at times, and he thought he was an Englishman. That was his one delusion. He was entirely harmless. And he stood by me like a man in storm, and fire, and battle."

"Mr. Harran!" she repeated, and, again, "Mr. Harran? Are you strong enough, Robert, to tell me how it was that Mr. Harran got you your passenger?"

"I have told you!" he said, a little peevishly. "Can't a woman even let a man die in peace? Harran wired me at Pedro to come up and get a passenger for the *Halcyon*. There was to be $5,000 in it for me. But I knew the old fox, and I wanted specifications. And it was to help a man away with the loot of widows and orphans—a bank defaulter. I knew that Harran was making his profit of the loot, too, but that was nothing to me."

Margaret was weeping softly, still holding his hand and still smoothing his hair. He looked at her, but he did not falter. There came a strange look into his eyes, as though his soul, loathing itself, yet scorned to hold anything back from her condemnation. And she only wept for him.

"You would have the tale," he said. "It was

nothing to me, a crime the more in a lawless life! I have thought, since then, watching Ainsworth, that he was the gentlest criminal that I had ever seen, and I have lived with sinners. But it made no difference to me when Harran made his offer. He knew what my life had been, and I knew. And I had served him before. I was simply to let a man stow away, so as not to become involved with the law and her owners, and to carry the passenger wherever he wanted to go."

He paused, groaning, and lay silent, yet still with his naked soul in his eyes.

"Robert," she said, at last, forcing her tears down, "did you know of the failure of the Bank of the Pacific?"

"The Bank of the Pacific? I may have known. Of course some bank had failed. I do not remember that I heard the name."

He was silent again, and she waited. When he resumed the relation it was with the set purpose apparent in his tone to go on with it to the end.

"We had a good run up from Pedro," he said, "although I lost a man there whom I had depended on. Running in past Alcatraz, we picked up a swimmer close to the island, nearly spent and delirious when taken from the water, and laid him in my cabin. When I dropped anchor in the stream, Harran came off in a launch to tell me that I was too late, that my passenger had drowned himself in the bay. I didn't care a great deal about that, being more concerned

with the way the old tightwad was trying to squeeze me in paying for the steamer's run up from Pedro; and with the risk I had run with her owners in having come at all. Much he cared whether I lost my job or not!" His voice was growing weaker, and he motioned for another dose of the stimulant.

"It was only when the old man followed me into the cabin to hand me the amount finally agreed upon," he went on, "that Harran saw the man we had picked up in the bay. I thought, at first, that he had gone mad.

"'That's your passenger!' he screamed. 'That's your passenger! Where in the name of Christ did you get him?'

"It didn't take long to tell him. He paid me on the nail—cash, and some bonds that I sold in Honolulu. He said the man's name was Norman Ainsworth. And he sent his trunk aboard after dark, and told me to get out of the port as quickly as I could. I was willing enough. I cleared her and went out that night. The lawyer stayed with me pretty much all the time I was ashore, and both Harran and the lawyer told me not to let the passenger out of my hands in port, whatever happened. But the passenger did not come to himself until we got well outside the Heads next morning. If he wanted to go back, he did not say so. I called him Norman Ainsworth, and although he hesitated sometimes just at first when he heard the name he answered to it, and called himself Ainsworth.

That is all, as to him. There has been much evil in my life besides, Margaret."

"God will pardon, dear!" she said. And then, very softly: "Can you tell me what happened at Honolulu, dear?"

"You seem strangely interested in this man," he said.

"Yes, dear."

"Well, Harran cabled me to take the *Tenyu Maru* for the East, and to take Ainsworth with me. That gave me the first intimation that somebody was seeking my passenger. I sounded Ainsworth, but he seemed to know no more than a child. Indeed, in many ways he was like a child. Harran had cabled $1,000 with his message, and as that looked good to me, I took passage for the Far East. At Hongkong I found orders from my owners to go down to Manila and get ready to take the *Neried* out to Iloilo for hemp. Harran cabled us there to hurry, and then I knew that my passenger was being followed. But if it was a chase, I could keep it up as long as the next man. And I did not think the law was in it yet; or Harran would not have been game to do the cabling. I was as good a fighter, man to man, as anybody who might be on the track. Besides, I had come to like Ainsworth, and I was determined to save him, whatever he might have done. We did hurry out of Iloilo, and then came the typhoon, and the fire, and my loss of a second steamer. It is well enough. When the sea turns against a man his time is at hand."

Once again he lay silent, only groaning at intervals. And Margaret, stooping over him, weeping for him, bent still lower to whisper: "And your passenger, Robert? Forgive me, dear, but I have a reason for wanting to be very sure. You never knew him by any other name?"

"I am dying," replied Robert Graeme, looking up at her. "His name is Norman Ainsworth."

He closed his eyes, and all around them there drifted a light fall, as of ashes. Only once did he seem to revive. Margaret, from time to time, put the stimulating draught to his lips, and he took it, and his fluttering breath showed that life still lingered. But over his whole face that light fell as if ashes had sifted down.

It was after the administration of the stimulant that he started up in bed, throwing Margaret's hand from him, and seeming to grope for a moment, as one in the dark. Then his eyes cleared. He stared at the woman sitting beside him, clear-eyed, now, facing the death of a wayward loved one. And recognition came back slowly into the face of the one who was passing.

"Margie!" he cried, going back once more to the childish name he had used to call her. "Sister Margie! You here? And Aunty Pen? Then, it was a dream! And I will not be a naughty boy any more, Aunty Pen! Sure and honest I will not!"

He settled back on his pillow very slowly, with a long, tremulous sigh. And the tangled hair that Margaret Graeme still smoothed and smoothed was a dead man's hair.

CHAPTER XXX

A SPY—AND A GAME CHICKEN

THEY buried him under a wide-branching camphor tree on the shore of that wild island near where he had fought his last fight. And a platoon of the Japanese soldiers fired a military salute over his grave. That was fitting. He had died like a soldier, and he had lived at war with mankind.

Turning from the grave, where Wentworth stood with bared head supporting the woman he loved while Allison gave his attention to Mrs. Penworthy, Captain Stoddard of the *Petrel* noted the spy, Di Sousa, in earnest consultation with the Japanese captain. And a moment later the Eurasian went tracking through the forest from the spot where the grave was toward the village. At once the captain hurried his people aboard the *Petrel*. He had a purpose in that. It was in furtherance of his purpose that he asked Captain McGreal, as he shoved off from the shore, to send aboard to him from the *Lurline* Di Sousa's prized game chicken. This McGreal readily agreed to do. He would have done it without Captain Stoddard's assurance that possession of the bird was necessary to the success of a play which would be explained later.

The yachts had gone back to their anchorage in the little harbour at once after the funeral, and when he got the game cock Captain Stoddard carried it ashore with him in his yawl, carefully hidden in a burlap sack. Using expedition in his movements, he beat Di Sousa into the village easily enough. And he waited for his man with full confidence at the door of the hut where the Japanese had set up their telegraphic instruments in connection with the cable from Formosa to Nagasaki.

"Hi, Di Sousa!" he exclaimed, as the spy, warm with walking, came trudging up to the door of the hut. "You know me?"

"Sar, yes," replied the Eurasian. "I know you. You beat me at Macao, it is ten years ago, because that I did report to the officer of the French of your smuggling arms to the Black Flags."

"And would have got me shot if I had not been smart enough to get away!" said Stoddard.

"Sar, that was my duty. But, sar, I know you! My bones hurt, sometimes, when I sleep."

"Very good," said Captain Stoddard to that, not the least disturbed. "Then you know what I can do. I will, if you please, take that cablegram that you are about to send to your employers in Manila. And you will come aboard the *Petrel* with me."

"Sar," replied Di Sousa, "I am free mans. And I will not. I will report to Japanese officer."

"Oh, will you?" cried Stoddard, opening the sack as he spoke, and drawing out from it the red game

cock, which he held, with affected carelessness, by the head. "Then I will wring this rooster's neck."

"*Madre di Dios!* Good señor! Good Captain Stoddard," cried Di Sousa, "keel me, sar! Beat me! Bote do not keel the cheecken!"

The man's English lapsed, as he became excited. Captain Stoddard gave the cock a careless whirl by the head.

"Give me the cablegram," he said.

Di Sousa had dropped on his knees, holding out his hands imploringly. He reached for an inner pocket, now, and drew out and handed a folded paper to his tormentor.

"Sar, eet is here!" he cried. "I pray you, for the holy name of God, do not keel the cheecken!"

Stoddard took the paper, opened it, and glanced at it. "In cipher," he said, shortly.

"Sar, eet was the order," said Di Sousa, still kneeling, to the amazement, and perhaps a little to the amusement, of the few straggling villagers who had gathered about the hut. "I pray you, spare the cheecken!"

"Get up!" said Stoddard, taking the spy roughly by the neck and pointing him toward the *Petrel's* yawl, which lay on the strand. "There is the road! March!"

He kept the spy ahead of him to the boat, the villagers following along, and once there, tossed the game cock to its owner. Di Sousa caught it

eagerly, and smoothed its ruffled plumage, and crooned over it as a mother croons over her child.

"*Pobrecito!*" he muttered. "The insult! And a cock that was never beatened!"

And while he mourned, and soothed his pet, he was landed safely aboard the *Petrel*, and turned over to the custody of the mate of that vessel. The mate was accustomed to obey orders and—had such orders as made it very sure that no report of the future doings of either yachting party would get to San Francisco through the agency in Manila which had sent out Di Sousa.

"I am very sorry to deprive you of the services of your cabin steward," said Captain Stoddard to Wentworth and Allison and Captain McGreal a little later, going on board the *Lurline* to explain his scheme. "But I knew that fellow had been a police spy. I had some experience myself with him, down at Macao, a few years ago. A man does not spend ten years on the China coast without learning to keep his eyes open. And when I saw that chap on your yacht, I made up my mind to keep watch on him. Of course he would make for the nearest cable office, after what happened to-day, and I was there first. I have made him read his cipher dispatch to me, and all this would have been known in San Francisco by now if I had not taken a hand when I did."

"How'd you come to think of the game cock?" asked Allison, with a smile.

"Moral suasion," replied Stoddard. "That cock comes of a particular strain he has bred a long time. And it is always better to avoid mere brute force."

"I suppose we will have to make our own cocktails, now," said Allison, sadly.

CHAPTER XXXI

SHADOW AND SUNSHINE

THAT evening, after the unmasking of the spy, Margaret and Wentworth sat together on the deck of the *Petrel*, and Margaret told her lover all that her dying brother had said with reference to his passenger.

"He gave no other name than Norman Ainsworth, dear," Margaret said. "Robert was told that he was a fugitive, a defaulter whom Harran, for a purpose of his own, wanted kept out of the way. Harran and Chester were to have put him on board the *Halcyon* in San Francisco Bay, but by a most strange coincidence Robert picked him up, swimming but near spent, off Alcatraz. Harran found him there, in Robert's cabin, and hurried the steamer to sea. Robert discovered, when his passenger came to himself, that his mind was enfeebled."

"What was it that destroyed his mental poise, I wonder?" mused Wentworth.

"Could it have been the result of that auto accident? They must have played upon him shamefully."

"Has he recovered consciousness?" asked Margaret.

"No. The Japanese surgeon, whom I left with him in my cabin on the *Lurline*, says that he has had in the past some great physical shock, leading to a gradual loss of himself. I had thought that he recovered completely from that auto accident, the only physical shock I have ever known him to sustain. He never complained. Whatever it was, the Japanese surgeon says that the shock of this present wound in the head, if he recovers it, may serve to counterbalance the old shock. But it is only a chance. The surgeon also says it is possible that he may awaken to complete imbecility. The wound itself is not mortal. Reason may be utterly destroyed."

He sighed deeply as he spoke.

"Ah, well," he went on. "I have my life's duty before me. I must watch and care for him. I will help him back to his old place in the world, if I may. There is much to be cleared away. I must ease his way to another world, if it is to be that he will come no more to the daylight of man's reason in this."

"It is our life duty, dear heart!" whispered Margaret, taking his hand, and holding it.

The two yachts, in company, sailed out through the opening in the reef next day, and squared away for Hongkong. The crew of the *Neried* had been divided between them, and the boy who had wept alone in the stern of the burning ship took the vacant place as cabin steward on board the *Lurline*—al-

though he did not know a cocktail from soft toddy, as Allison said, plaintively. Each sailor in the crew of the burned ship had a wonderful tale to tell of how the steamer—all afire in her forward hold, driven on before the storm and driving with her engines in a mad effort to reach the beach—had struck the sharp reef and been caught and whelmed in the tremendous seas that drove clear over her, flooding the open hatches, and all but extinguishing the flames. They were seas such as not even the oldest seaman among them had ever seen before, and their force had left the *Neried* stranded where the natives had found and attacked her next morning.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE WICKED CEASE FROM TROUBLING

BEING an extract from a letter written by Mr. Frederick Upson, of San Francisco, and addressed to Mr. and Mrs. John Wentworth, on board the yacht *Petrel*, harbour of Manga Riva, Fiji Islands.

Oh, you two turtle doves! To go sailing off there across the sunlit tropic seas while we toil and moil in this great mill whose grist is gold, only and always gold! And, that reminds me! I have gathered from the bin of the mill a very considerable quantity of that same grist, which I have deposited to the order of the male member of your Happiness Association (Unlimited). This particular grist I have taken care to deposit with my own banker, where it will be entirely safe, and where it is subject to draft.

Allison came into port safely in the *Lurline*, after sailing right slap across the Northern Pacific with his pirate crew, every villain of which is devoted to him. He delivered your letters, and the spy, Di Sousa, into my hands. I laughed and laughed when I heard how that sturdy old reprobate,

Stoddard, used a game rooster to hold up a cablegram to the private detective agency in Manila, and then kidnapped the detective on the ground bodily.

Di Sousa sails for the Far East in the *China* next Wednesday, and if a golden salve may heal a wounded spirit, he will go away happy. I regret that the real artistry of mixing cocktails must go back to that far country with him. I tried to get him to teach Brooks, who seems to have fastened himself upon me for my sins, but that villain never could catch the knack of mixing and drinking in reasonable moderation at the same time. And so Di Sousa carries his art across the seas. They seem to have all the delights of life beyond Suez. You will be glad to hear that the game chicken, which Di Sousa is taking home with him, is pert and cocky. And so, let the pair of them go!

With the weapons that Allison put into my hands, coming back to more serious concerns, my game was easy. The fact that E.W. was alive, and apparently on the road to complete recovery of reason, made a strong card. The information E. W. had already given relative to the sequestration of certain trust securities, in which Harran and Chester figured, put the proof into our hands that these two, and these two alone, had known and traded upon E. W.'s failing mentality following that hurt on the head in the Park auto accident from which all the balance of his friends thought he had made complete recovery.

The discovery of that condition, in fact, armed us with the absolute knowledge that Harran and Chester had as free access to the bank's vaults as E. W. himself had after they had discovered his weakness. The fact that these two arch scoundrels had planned to shanghai E. W. on board the *Halcyon*, in effect, and then had taken advantage of the trick fate played him in being picked up by that very steamer to hurry her out of port, gave us the moral certainty that they had driven him to frantic desperation on the day the bank closed its doors. Probably he had not meant to come back, when he swam out into the bay from the bathing place at North Beach. It seems certain, at all events, that he had no clear realization of his condition, nor of what he did. But his own action, and the accident of his being picked up by the *Halcyon*, served the original purpose of Harran and Chester as well as they themselves could have served it. They got him out of the way, and the world believed him dead, and could blame him as it liked.

The certificate of the English army surgeon at Hongkong, in line with the opinion of the Japanese surgeon, was of the most value. That opinion alone—showing that the patient suffered from delusions following a hurt on the head and would probably recover his mental poise completely by reason of the counteracting nervous shock from the gunshot wound, which would neutralize the effect of the former injury—would have given us the line we needed,

even if E. W. himself had not directed our efforts to some extent by what he has already been able to tell. And, lastly, there was the disastrous mistake of Chester in letting out of his own hands the bonds sold by R. G. in Honolulu. Altogether, I considered my case pretty complete.

And it was. I called on Chester in the fullest confidence that I could make him crawl. You should have seen us sparring! It was a real lesson in free-hand courtesy between enemies who hated each other. I don't believe we called a thing in the world by its right name during the whole course of the talk.

But when it came to the showdown, I had the goods on him all right. And we arrived at results. That is to say, I arrived at results. Chester found it necessary to telephone for Harran after an exceedingly uncomfortable half hour.

The old man came down to the bank in a tearing rage. It was cyclonic, really typhoonic, if you can get a clearer realization of my meaning from that descriptive adjective. It really looked as though he thought that he could bluster the thing out, until I showed him a card or two in my hand, and hinted at the possible return of E. W. to San Francisco, clothed and in his right mind.

Then he whines. And his whining was to such purpose that I have been able to put a million to John's credit with my bankers. I was careful to store this spoil in that safe place. And I will le-

Harran alone for the present, unless I hear some more talk about that United States senatorship. If that comes up again, something is likely to happen.

There is nothing else here; except that Allison has gone back to Honolulu in the *Lurline*.

And, so, sail on, you turtle doves, across the sunny waves! If E. W. fully recovers health and strength, with the sea air, and the restful life on the yacht, and the contemplation of the peaceful picture of the happiness of his children, it will be time enough to talk then of bringing him back to the battlefield.

But it is a matter for John to decide, or for E. W. himself, perhaps. I have things in line at this end. The decision can wait. It would be nothing new, nor very surprising, for this town to have its gods pulled down about its ears with a run. San Francisco has set up many gods—and will set up many more.

THE END

THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK

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